DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 413 605 CS 216 075

AUTHOR	Andrews, Sharon Vincz; Ali, Cynthia D.
TITLE	Teach Your Children Values: 95 Things Parents Can Do!
INSTITUTION	ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading, English, and Communication, Bloomington, IN.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
ISBN	ISBN-1-883790-24-7
PUB DATE	1997-00-00
NOTE	133p.; Published with EDINFO Press.
CONTRACT	RR93002011
AVAILABLE FROM	EDINFO Press, P.O. Box 5247, Bloomington, IN 47407.
PUB TYPE	Books (010) -- Guides - Non-Classroom (055) -- ERIC Publications (071)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adolescents; Children; Childrens Literature; Elementary Secondary Education; *Ethical Instruction; *Individual Development; Learning Activities; *Moral Development; *Moral Values; Parent Child Relationship; *Parents as Teachers; Social Values
IDENTIFIERS	Trade Books

ABSTRACT

This book offers ideas to help parents teach positive values to their children. The book suggests ways to teach children to have the courage to tell the truth; to understand the value of hard work and persistence; and to make positive contributions to their community, their country, and their world. It includes four sections on helping children grow into successful individuals, family members, students, and citizens. The book contains 95 activities and lists of carefully selected popular, award-winning children's books which offer positive learning experiences so that children can cultivate important character traits and values, such as honesty, persistence, appreciating the value of hard work, and avoiding stereotypes. (CR)

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Teach Your Children VALUES

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ED 413 605

95 Things Parents Can Do!

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INCLUDES Recommended Children's Literature to Help Reinforce Positive Values

By Sharon Vinez Andrews and Cynthia D. Ali

2

Teach Your Children Values

95 Things Parents Can Do!

by Sharon Vincz Andrews
and Cynthia D. Ali

CS216075

ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading, English, and Communication
EDINFO Press

Published 1997 by
ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading, English, and Communication
Carl B. Smith, Director
2805 East 10th Street, Suite 150
Bloomington, Indiana 47408-2698
and
EDINFO Press
P.O. Box 5247
Bloomington, Indiana 47407

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Printed in the United States of America

Design and production: David J. Smith
Photos on pages 3, 8, 29, 37, 75, 80, 98, 118, and 122 by Sharon Vincz Andrews.
Photos on pages 13, 16, 23, 41, 47, 54, 59, 62, 71, 87, 93, and 111 by David J. Smith.
Photo on page 102 by Robert Congdon.
Photo on page 121 by Dale Andrews.

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This publication was prepared with partial funding from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, under contract no. RR93002011. Contracts undertaking such projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their judgment in professional and technical matters. Points of view, however, do not necessarily represent the official view or opinions of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Andrews, Sharon Vincz.
Teach your children values : 95 things parents can do / by Sharon Vincz Andrews and Cynthia D. Ali.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references.
ISBN 1-883790-24-7 (pbk.)
1. Child rearing. 2. Children—Conduct of life. 3. Social values. 4. Moral education. 5. Parent and child. I. Ali, Cynthia D., 1956- . II. Title.
HQ769.A5757 1997
649'.7—dc21

97-4571
CIP

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For our sons,
Jason and Danny

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FOREWORD

In a way, this book began with Sharon's three-year study of the values taught in old children's readers from the 1800s—McGuffey Readers, Howe Readers, and others—and the values taught in the modern readers currently being used in the school systems around the country. (These studies are fully explained in her 1994 book for teachers, *Teaching Kids to Care: Exploring Values through Literature and Inquiry*.) The traditional and mainstream values listed in this book sprang from those studies and were not, therefore, chosen arbitrarily. These values represent the cultural values and beliefs of many generations of Americans.

Many of the activities we developed ourselves and "tested" on our own children and children of friends. Others come from a variety of sources—parents, teachers, preservice teachers, and friends.

Throughout this book we recommend popular, award-winning literature offered by children's book clubs and available in public libraries. Although we have read all books that we recommend for use with the activities in our book, we strongly encourage parents to preview every book. We want you to enjoy the books and to be sure that the messages and stories are age-appropriate for your children and that those messages and stories support your family's beliefs and values.

We hope you enjoy the books and activities we have put together. We would like to hear from you if you have ideas for additional books and activities, or if you have questions or comments on this book. You can write to us c/o ERIC/EDINFO Press, Indiana University, P.O. Box 5953, Bloomington, IN 47407 or E-Mail us at eeandrew@befac.indstate.edu.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank our parents, Renee and Edward Dain, for helping us to see the importance of strong positive values in our own lives. We are grateful to our husbands, Dale and Jehad, for their ideas and support of this project.

We would also like to thank many families in central Indiana for agreeing to be interviewed and photographed, and for sharing ideas for this book: Diana Blazer and her son, Christopher; Matt and Sandy Sweeney and their children, Broud, Caitlin, Maggie, Sarah, Lochlin, and Betsy; Wayne and Vivian Winston and their children, Jennifer and Gregory; Jean Boukary and her daughters, Amina and Karima; Stephen Malone; Angie Campbell and her daughter, Stephanie; Lisa Sigman and her son, Chip; Kathy Wilson and her son, Grant; Belainish Beiene and her daughter, Rishan; Mr. and Mrs. Noh Myung Wu and their sons, Jae Seung and Jae Won; Bibiana Stutsman and her son, Dylan; Gregory Morrow and his daughter, Emily; and Carrie Glover and her daughter, Carly. And finally, we want to thank Amy Gaines and her staff at Penny Lane Day Care for providing time and space for talking with parents of young children.

Sharon would also like to thank Indiana State University, which supported this project as part of her sabbatical year work.

INTRODUCTION

Nothing can replace the family as the primary source of values teaching and learning. It is only natural that parents, as their children's first and most influential teachers, should convey the traditions, the joys, and the responsibilities of family life. Although going to school brings a new set of influences, the job of teaching children right from wrong and of showing them ways to live as a happy family will always be the work of parents.

When you set good examples that show your children you respect positive values such as honesty and trustworthiness, you send powerful messages. However, the teaching of values does not end with good examples. Families can benefit from discussion of specific values and from simple activities and children's books that highlight values in the home, school, and community.

Each section of this book focuses on a specific value such as *Gratitude* or *Honesty*. Within each section you will find information, ideas, and activities that can help you lead your child toward the desired goals. At the end of each section there is a list of children's books that elaborate on the value that has been discussed. *Always preview each recommended book* to be sure that you enjoy it and that its message is suitable for your child and your family. Books are marked with the following symbols:

P indicates picture books for young children from preschool through grade three.

C indicates chapter books for older children or for parents to read to children as soon as they can sit still to listen to a book without pictures.

PART ONE

Helping Your Child Develop as an Individual

Building a Positive Self-Image

As soon as they are born, children begin to develop a concept of themselves and of those around them. Fill those first days with love, acceptance, and joy. So many of the simple and natural activities that are a part of parenting can provide children with a firm foundation on which to develop a positive self-image. Activities that are fun for parents and children can help your child feel worthy and loved. Positive self-images begin with loving gestures such as spending time with your children, responding to their talk, play, and work, listening attentively, and giving evidence of affection such as hugs and pats on the back. Beyond these basics, here are a few ideas you can use or adapt to your family setting.

1. "Blooming" Books

A wonderful book by Robert Kraus entitled *Leo the Late Bloomer* tells about a little lion who seems to have trouble keeping up with his friends as he tries to master the simple

tasks of childhood. In the end, he "blooms" in every area: he talks, he draws—he even eats neatly! The parents—one very concerned, the other waiting patiently for the "late bloomer"—are portrayed as loving and supportive. This book shows the child that everyone is still learning and has things to "bloom" at.

Try this!

Establish a "Blooming Book" for each child in your household. Date the entries and help each child record ideas if he or she is not yet a writer. Begin the book with a page listing all the things the child has "bloomed" at: dressing himself, brushing his teeth, learning the alphabet, and so on. Then do a page of things he still needs to work on. Think of these as goals to be accomplished—things to look forward to. When a child reaches a goal, praise the accomplishment, mark it off the "still need to bloom at" list, and add it to the "blooming" list. Keep things lighthearted and celebratory; the "still to be bloomed at" list should not represent drudgery to be en-

dured before the child is accepted and loved. Always celebrate the "blooming"!

2. "I Can" List

The "I Can" List is similar to the "Blooming Book" but is less formal and more easily accomplished. All you have to do is help your child make a list of all the things he can *already* do.

Try this!

Keep the "I Can" List displayed in a prominent place (such as the refrigerator) and add new items as the child learns to do more things. This is especially good to help children through periods of self-doubt or perceived failures: "Well, maybe you can't ride that two-wheeler yet, but look at all the things you *can* do!"

3. "Me Books" or "Me Boxes"

Everyone has talents and interests that are unique. It builds self-image to have one's family and friends recognize and acknowledge the attributes that make each child uniquely himself or herself. This is something the whole family can do, and it's also a good idea to share when seldom-seen relatives or friends come to visit.

Try this!

Have each member of the family fill shoe boxes or small containers with items that express who they are: their interests or hobbies. For example, a child might include a baseball card, a trophy, a piece of sheet music, stamps, a doll, a game, a small toy animal, or a book. Parents can also share themselves and their interests in this way. Children need to hear about the things that *parents* like and want to

do. Children will learn that everyone has some unique qualities and that everyone's interests and talents are important.

A variation:

The "Me Book" could begin as the familiar "Baby Book" that many parents keep when a child is born. Continue the collection of photos, ticket stubs, favorite books, etc. in a scrapbook. Update and share the scrapbook every so often. This gives parents and children a chance to share progress and growth and to enjoy family togetherness.

4. Mirror, Mirror, on the Wall

Some children may not realize that they have unique qualities. Looking in a mirror helps your child understand the idea of being special.

Try this!

You and your young child (ages 2–4) sit in front of a mirror. Tell your child all the things you love about her, all the things that make her special. Make a list, if you like, and post it on the mirror or in the child's room.

A variation:

Trace the outline of your child on a large piece of paper and write your list inside the outline. Hang it up in the child's room or in the family room.

5. "This Is Me" Dialogue-Journal

In today's fast-paced society, children often have little time for reflecting on the day's events. Parents and children can benefit by taking time to communicate with each other.

Try this!

Keep a journal with your child. Ask her to record successes, problems, and special events in the journal several times a week. Then take a few minutes to respond in writing to the journal entry. This is a special bonding time between you and your child, and it also provides a meaningful way to say "What you do and think are special to me." A bonus feature is the practice in reading and writing.

Books about Building a Positive Self-Image

Carlson, N. (1988). *I like me*. New York: Viking Kestrel. **P**
A very simple book about a little pig who finds all kinds of things to like about herself. Good for pre-schoolers. Easy for parents to "pattern" the language for their own child as they read.

de Paola, T. (1988). *The legend of the Indian paintbrush*. New York: Putnam. **P**
A Native American legend gently retold about a young boy who knows he is not destined to be a great warrior or hunter but does become an artist who shares the life of his people through his painting.

Hoffman, M. (1991). *Amazing Grace*. New York: Dial. **P**
A book about an energetic and creative African-American girl who wants to be Peter Pan in the school play. When classmates discourage her because she is black and a girl, her strong mother and grandmother help her to succeed. Beautiful illustrations.

Kraus, R. (1971). *Leo the late bloomer*. New York: Simon and Schuster. **P**
Delightful story about a little lion who can't do anything right. Mother lion knows that Leo is just a late bloomer and gently chides Father lion, "A watched bloomer never blooms." Eventually Leo can do everything his friends can do.

Sharmat, M. (1977). *I'm terrific*. New York: Holiday House. **P**
Lovely illustrations and gentle scenes between Mother Bear and her little Jason Bear make this a lovely read-aloud with some wonderful lessons about being yourself and learning about how to be a friend. When all seems hopeless in Jason's quest for friends and Jason says, "Maybe I am just a Mama's Bear," Mother Bear says, "You're just a good bear who is thinking things over." This is the turning point, and Jason learns to think for himself.

Steptoe, J. (1987). *Mufaro's beautiful daughters: An African tale*. New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard. **P**
Beautiful illustrations and language highlight a moral tale about real beauty. Two daughters are challenged to reveal their inner beauty, and one learns a hard lesson.

Waber, B. (1972). *Ira sleeps over*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. **P**
A story about growing up and learning to be away from parents overnight. It's about courage and a new self-concept.

Individuality

In schools today, there is an emphasis on group work and cooperative learning. Although children need to learn to work with others, it is also important for them to be comfortable being themselves and sometimes being different from the group. As children move from the primary

grades to middle school, there is increasing peer pressure to be like everyone else. Parents need to build a firm foundation of independent thinking and self-worth when children are young so that there is a good balance between being oneself and working with the group.

6. Glad to Be Me

Children sometimes wish they were someone else or at least that they could do things like older brothers and sisters or friends. Parents can help children accept who they are right now.

Try this!

Read the delightful book *Edward, the Emu* to your child. It has a predictable rhyming pattern that children love to hear. Edward learns to value his own individuality in the story, although at first he wants to be anything but an emu. After reading the story, talk with your child about what makes each animal in the story and each one in the family different and

special. Draw a family picture and make a list of special things about each one under their pictures.

7. Check the Closet!

Children often feel pressure to be like everyone else. All parents have heard the plea, "But Lisa has one! Why can't I?"

Try this!

Read *The Araboolies of Liberty Street* by Samuel Swope about a very unusual family that moves onto a very usual street. Discuss what made this family unique and why they had problems with the neighbors. Then you and your child "walk" through the closet and drawers, inspecting clothes for "same as everyone else" or "unique, just like me."

8. On the Day You Were Born

Children love to hear stories about when they were "little" and even "the day you were born" stories. Such storytelling helps to reinforce the fact that they are important to the family and you are so glad they came.

Try this!

Read *On the Day You Were Born* by Debra Frasier. It's a beautiful book about all parts of nature rejoicing when a child is born and welcoming the child into the world. Then think back to the day your child was born. List the location, the weather, pets, other children in the family, whether it was day or night, and any other details you can remember. Then, taking the pattern of the book, create your own lovely free verse poem about the day your child was born. Encourage your child to add creative ideas about how nature rejoiced the day she was born. Add the poem to your child's baby book or scrapbook.

Books about Individuality

Arkin, A. (1976). *The lemming condition*. New York: Harper & Row. **C**

A very interesting book about a little lemming who figures out that he need not join all the other lemmings in their rush into the sea. A good read-aloud book for children (grades 3-5) who may be starting to feel peer pressure and who need to do more independent thinking.

Henkes, K. (1991). *Chrysanthemum*. New York: Greenwillow. **P**

A lighthearted book about a little mouse whose unusual name—Chrysanthemum—is beautiful to her until she goes to school, where she is teased by the other children. A kindhearted teacher helps her accept her name and herself in the process.

Kasza, K. (1988). *The pig's picnic*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. **P**

A delightful little picture book about a pig who thinks he's not quite interesting enough to attract his girlfriend. He borrows fox's tail, lion's mane, etc. until he looks quite "interesting." He scares his friend, and she tells him she will find Mr. Pig (him!) to rescue her.

Knowles, S. (1988). *Edward, the emu*. New York: Angus & Robertson. **P**

Humorous illustrations and repetitious rhyming verses make this an instant hit with children. Edward learns that, although it is fun to act like the other animals in the zoo, being himself is the best thing to be.

Shannon, G. (1981). *Lizard's song*. New York: Greenwillow. **P**

A whimsical little book about a bear who wants very much to learn a song that he hears a lizard singing. He finally learns to sing his own song. Great for discussion about children's personal skills and talents and why each child is special and should not envy another's gifts.

Making Decisions

Parents can make the idea of democracy real for their children by encouraging them to make decisions. Young children obviously cannot make major decisions regarding bedtime or food choices, but the parents who find ways to support children in intelligent choices are contributing to the growth of a future citizenry capable of decision making on a larger scale. Choices must be hammered out in the context of a loving family, rules must be explained and negotiated at times, and children must recognize both their boundaries and their choices.

9. Choosing Books at the Library

When you encourage children to choose their own books, you send two very valuable messages: "Books are worthwhile" and "I am a competent chooser of my books."

Try this!

Make a time for library visits. Make it a special and regular time for you and your child; perhaps have a treat afterwards. Children's librarians are happy to point you to the picture books and other types of reading materials suitable for your child. You, of course, may also choose books for you and your child to read together. Be sure to spend some time each day

reading those books with your child. Ask what she likes about them: Was this a good choice? Why or why not? Draw out from the child some ways to choose books that will be successful: "Are there some ways to choose books besides just looking at the covers? Could we read the first few pages together and then decide?"

10. Wise Shoppers

Many children take their lunches to school. With a bit of education about the "food pyramid," children can learn to make wise choices about their lunches.

Try this!

Your market will have a copy of the "food pyramid." After discussing it with your child, plan the grocery list together, letting the child choose lunch items for the week.

11. Choice of Limited Television Viewing

Children need choices about how to spend their free time. Unfortunately, many children will choose television over other activities. Unlimited television watching dulls a child's creative capacities, creates passive thinkers and spectators, and often contributes to reading problems in school. To be well balanced in mind and body, children need time for hobbies, reading, and outdoor play.

Try this!

Limit television watching to six to ten hours per week depending on the age of the child. (There will be howls of protest at first—stick with it!) You, as the parent, can set the guidelines about the kinds of programs that are suitable and then let the child choose which ones to watch. He can add up the hours and calculate which programs to watch for the

week. Help your child make his weekly list from the TV Guide and post it near the television. If no one's scheduled program is on, the television should be off. This may take some new discipline for Mom and Dad as well. Do it for your children and yourself.

12. Rules: Make 'em, Don't Break 'em!

Household rules are important for maintaining peace and order in the home. Children are more inclined to observe the rules if they have a hand in helping to develop them.

Try this!

When children are old enough to think through the idea of rules and why they are important (typically, early primary years), have a family meeting in which you all discuss what the family needs for making life at home more efficient and pleasant. See if children have any developing rules and some consequences for breaking the rules. For example, "The

family room needs to be picked up Sunday evening so we can start the week in an orderly way. It's mostly children toys and dishes, so the children should be responsible. If it isn't done with one reminder, no TV on Monday." Children should contribute ideas for rules as well as consequences. Have a family meeting regularly to discuss how well the rules are working.

Books about Making Decisions

Lowry, L. (1993). *The giver*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. **C**
An amazing tale about a twelve-year-old boy who has been chosen by the elders in a futuristic society to become the next "giver"—the holder of the memories of the community. All decisions about your life are made for you by the elders in this community. (Parent preview: for upper elementary and middle-school students.)

Rice, E. (1979). *New blue shoes*. New York: Puffin Books. **P**
The main character has a hard time deciding which new shoes to buy. A good focus on decision making for young children.

Sharmat, M. (1977). *I'm terrific*. New York: Holiday House. **P**
A picture book about Jason Everett Bear, who needs to learn to think for himself. A loving mother bear helps him to "become his own bear." About friendship, self-concept, and family love.

Van Allsberg, C. (1992). *Two bad ants*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. **P**
Two ants decide to leave the long lines of worker ants and go off on their own to explore a house and search for sugar crystals. Their adventures, portrayed from an ant's point of view (a cup of coffee as a scalding brown lake), help to bring home the point that there is safety in obedience.

Gratitude

In our consumer society, children often receive an abundance of material things. It can be difficult for parents to help their children express real gratitude for their everyday clothing, shelter, family life, and even for gifts. It sometimes seems a sad "rule" of American life that the more we give our children, the less grateful they are. A grateful attitude and the actions that express it should be regularly demonstrated by parents.

13. Prayers and Blessings

If you hold religious beliefs that include God as a Provider and Creator, teach your children simple prayers of gratitude and thanks at meals and at bedtime.

Try this!

In order to help children understand that people all over the world give thanks to God, search out simple prayers from many cultures and religions.

14. Family Volunteering

One of the often unplanned consequences of helping those less fortunate is that we become more grateful for our blessings.

Try this!

Call a local shelter or food kitchen. If it is appropriate for your whole family to volunteer there, spend a day helping to cook, clean, organize—whatever is needed. That evening at dinner, discuss your own gratitude for your home and family. Invite children to express their feelings.

15. Thank-You Notes

From an early age, children need to take responsibility for acknowledging the kindness of others.

Try this!

Have a special place in your home or in your child's room where paper, markers, pencils, and envelopes are available.

Encourage and insist upon the writing of thank-you notes. If necessary, help your children write to grandparents and others who send special treats or regularly give gifts, send cookies, and do other kind deeds for the family.

Obedience

All families are different, but all parents need to let children know that there are boundaries in their lives. Children are happier and homes more peaceful when rules are discussed and enforced. Those rules should include the discipline of limiting the number of toys and other consumer items that children are programmed by television to want. Indulging a child's every whim, either at the toy store or at the grocery store candy aisle, rarely makes for thoughtful, kind, cooperative children. Parents, do yourselves a favor—just say "No."

16. Consequences

One of the most valuable things any parent can do for children is to establish rules and see that they are obeyed. If you wish to operate your home with a version of democracy, then by all means decide upon rules with your children (see #12). *But*, if the rules are broken, there must be immediate and real consequences for the child. Doing chores is also a form of obedience.

Try this!

Set simple rules for room cleaning, table setting, dish washing—whatever is appropriate for your family's lifestyle. Set time limits—"Rooms will be cleaned by noon on Saturday"—and then spell out specifically what the consequences will be and *stick to it*. For example, one effective punishment—"No television on Saturday or Sunday if your room is not clean by noon on Saturday"—is more effective than a hundred lectures on "doing your chores."

17. Checklists

Children need to feel that they are accomplishing the tasks of growing up and that they are making progress.

Try this!

Make a chart of chores and duties for each member of the household. (It is enlightening for children to see how much parents have to do to keep the household running smoothly.) Give a "check" for all duties done on time. Give a "star" for those done without being reminded. This practice not only builds respect and obedience but also encourages children to take responsibility for themselves.

Books about Obedience

Mosel, A. (1968). *Tikki Tikki Tembo*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston. **P**

A Chinese fable that explains why Chinese children now have shorter names. A humorous little lesson on obedience.

Polacco, P. (1990). *Babushka's doll*. New York: Simon and Schuster. **P**

A young girl learns a lesson about obedience, respect, and compassion through an encounter with Grandma's doll.

Van Allsberg, C. (1992). *Two bad ants*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. **P**

A humorous story of two bad ants who decide to stay in a sugar bowl instead of returning to the ant colony with their group. Through a series of mishaps, such as being stirred into a whirling hot brown lake (coffee), they learn to appreciate home, to stay with the group, and to obey.

Honesty

Children are surrounded by examples of dishonesty on TV and perhaps even among friends. Parents need to set a good example by being honest with their children and by refusing to ask children to tell "little white lies" for them, such as responding, "Just say I'm not home" to an unwanted phone call. Also, don't threaten to do things that you know you won't do. These examples of dishonesty give children the unspoken but loud message that dishonesty is OK and can sometimes serve you well.

18. True and Not True

Young children need some practice in telling the difference between "true" and "not true."

Try this!

Make a of game of telling "true" from "not true." Begin with simple, everyday facts and move toward issues of behavior. Begin with, "Let's see if you can tell something that is true from something that is not true." Have a list that includes items such as: "The moon is purple." "We smell with our eyes." "Cows give milk." Move toward items that show behaviors, such as, "Break the garage window and then say, 'I didn't do it.'" "Forget to feed the dog and say, 'Yes, I forgot to feed it.'"

19. Set a Good Example

When children turn twelve, make sure they pay full price for a movie ticket. Also be sure that they understand why they are doing this. Also, if you get too much change at the grocery store, give the change back and make sure the child is aware of what you are doing and why. One of the simplest ways to reason with children on this basic value is the "Golden Rule"—*Do unto others as you would have them do unto you*. In other words, if the grocery store clerk did not give you enough change, you certainly would bring it to her attention and expect a correction.

Books about Honesty

Bauer, M. (1986). *On my honor*. New York: Clarion. **C**

A book for older children. A boy and his friend want to ride their bikes to a park. One boy lies about his parents giving permission to go. The other parents give in and let them go. When one boy drowns, the other leaves and says he doesn't know what happened to his friend. This heartfelt struggle with truth telling is a gripping book. (Parent preview: mature subject.)

Bell, A. (1986). *The emperor's new clothes: A fairy tale*. New York: North South Books. **P**

The classic tale about a young boy who, in his innocence and honesty, actually tells the hoodwinked king that he is wearing no clothes.

Fox, P. (1984). *One-eyed cat*. Scarsdale, NY: Bradbury Press. **C**

A good read-aloud for older children about a boy who accidentally shoots out the eye of a cat. His struggles with honesty and restitution are a wonderful vicarious experience for middle-grade children.

Myers, W. (1992). *Somewhere in the darkness*. New York: Scholastic. **C**

A father escapes from jail because he wants to see his son before he dies. Wonderful book for discussion about mercy versus justice. (Parent preview: mature subject.)

Naylor, P. (1991). *Shiloh*. New York: Atheneum. **C**

Another good read-aloud book about a boy who is torn between his desire to do the morally right thing and rescue a mistreated dog from its cruel owner and his knowledge that just keeping a dog that does not belong to him is legally wrong. Positive value-laden and heartwarming conclusion.

Ness, E. (1966). *Sam, Bangs, and Moonshine*. New York: Rinehart & Winston. **P**

A young girl who often exaggerates to the point of lying finds that her habit eventually causes trouble for herself and someone she cares about.

Soto, G. (1993). *Too many tamales*. New York: Putnam. **P**

Lighthearted picture book about members of a Hispanic family who get together to make lots of tamales. A young girl secretly borrows a piece of jewelry and loses it in the tamales! Eventually she admits her "crime," and they must eat all the tamales to find it.

Initiative

We all appreciate the ability to begin a task and to follow through energetically. Children today have so many ready-made games, toys, and electronic distractions, it is no wonder that they often complain of boredom if there is nothing on TV. They need occasional empty spaces and times that require them to think of something interesting and creative to do.

20. No-TV-Let's-Be-Creative Days.

Encourage children to plan events, shows, sales, and other activities that put them in charge and require some plan of action and thoughtful carry-through. Depending on the age of the children, you may offer to bake the cookies for the sale (charging the little salespeople for the ingredients) or make lemonade or sort out some old clothes for costumes, but then let them figure out how to accomplish their goals.

Books about Initiative

Baylor, B. (1986). *I'm in charge of celebrations*. New York: Scribner's. **P**

A young girl takes charge of her "celebrations" and develops a list of special days—not the usual birthdays and holidays but days that are meaningful to her, such as the

day she saw a beautiful sunset or an eagle. It's the perfect book for families that do not celebrate birthdays and traditional holidays.

Gardiner, J. (1980). *Stone fox*. New York: Crowell. **C**
The story of a grade-school boy whose grandfather is going to lose his farm because of back taxes. The boy enters a dogsled race in order to raise the money. The farm is saved, but the passing of the loyal dog makes for a sad ending.

George, J. (1973). *Julie of the wolves*. London: Hamilton. **C**
A good read-aloud book, especially for upper-level grade-school girls. A young girl leaves an abusive family and survives on her own with wolves in the wilderness. (Parent preview: early marriage and harsh treatment of the girl.)

Paulsen, G. (1991). *The river*. New York: Delacorte. **C**
A good read-aloud for middle-grade children about a 14-year-old boy who survives a disaster on the river. It is a sequel to *Hatchet* by the same author about the same boy who survives in the wilderness for forty days with only a hatchet as a tool.

Spinelli, J. (1990). *Maniac Magee*. Boston: Little, Brown. **C**
The story of a boy who runs away to live with a family from another culture. Through his initiative and efforts, the divided community comes together.

Ingenuity and Achievement

We tend to admire people who demonstrate ingenuity—who use imagination to come up with clever ways of doing things. We also respect those who accomplish things successfully, especially through skill and perseverance. It is important for children to become aware of these values.

21. Community Fix-Up

Most communities have problem areas: the vacant lot needs cleaning and weeding, there is trash on the streets, elderly neighbors need help and visits.

Try this!

Talk with your family about all the problem areas in your community (or your own yard!) that need work. Then have a problem-solving session in which the children come up with ideas for taking care of the neighborhood. Then work on it!

22. Take Lessons

Most children want to take lessons of some kind—dancing, karate, gymnastics, piano. Encourage your child to develop his or her talent and to achieve a level of skill in some area. This sense of achievement further builds the positive self-image that you have instilled in your child from the beginning.

Books about Ingenuity and Achievement

Cleary, B. (1983). *Dear Mr. Henshaw*. New York: Morrow. **C**
A touching story of a boy whose parents are divorced. He writes to a children's author over a period of several years and reveals his life and his courage.

Gardiner, J. (1980). *Stone fox*. New York: Crowell. **C**
A young boy's grandfather is ill and is going to lose his farm. The boy decides to enter a dogsled race with his much-loved dog. Through his skill, ingenuity, and some help from a friend, he wins the race. (Parent preview: sad ending.)

Polacco, P. (1993). *The bee tree*. New York: Philomel. **P**
An ingenious way to find wild honey! Catch a bee in a jar; then let him out and follow him. Catch another bee and do the same until they lead you to the honey. Wonderful illustrations show the joy of finding your own way to accomplish a task.

Persistence

Many children may not realize the importance of sticking to a course of action, a belief, or a purpose without giving way. It is very easy in our age of instant gratification to give up too quickly on solving a problem or learning a skill. We sometimes feel that everything should be as easy and quick as ordering a burger and fries at the drive-through window! Encouraging and rewarding persistence in the achievement of a worthwhile goal can do much to help children develop this valuable character trait.

23. Stay With It!

Most children want to earn money or take lessons of some kind during their grade-school and middle-school years. Before that paper route or those dancing lessons begin, sit down with your child and agree on a minimum time limit for this activity. If children are allowed to quit as soon as things are difficult or they become bored with the idea, they will not develop the persistence that is so needed as they mature in school and in their adult lives.

Books about Persistence

Bash, B. (1990). *Urban roosts*. Boston: Little, Brown. **P**
A nonfiction book about the persistence of pigeon roosting and nesting in cities where there are no trees.

Bunting, E. (1991). *Fly away home*. New York: Clarion. **P**
A touching book about a boy and his father who live at the airport because they are homeless. The father works, and he is continually looking for a way out of his dilemma.

Hill, E. (1967). *Evan's corner*. New York: Viking. **P**
A poverty-stricken family shares a very small apartment. Evan fixes up a corner of it just for himself but realizes that his happiness is not complete until he helps to bring happiness to others.

Hoffman, M. (1991). *Amazing Grace*. New York: Dial. **P**
A lovely story of a young African-American girl who lives with her mother and grandmother. Beautiful illustrations show how creative and dramatic she is. When she wants to be Peter Pan in the school play, her friends tell her that she can't because she's black and she's a girl. Her understanding grandma helps her regain her confidence, and she becomes a wonderful Peter Pan.

Lyon, G. (1990). *Come a tide*. New York: Orchard. **P**
Neighbors in a rural community patiently and persistently deal with flooding. Great illustrations and humorous text.

McCully, E. (1992). *Mirette on the high wire*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons. **P**
A young girl demonstrates persistence and self-confidence as she learns to walk the high wire.

Paulsen, G. (1990). *Woodsong*. New York: Bradbury Press. **C**
This autobiography explores the author's life in the wilderness. He explains how his life changed as a result of running his dogs in the wilderness of Minnesota and having the persistence to run the Iditarod dogsled race across Alaska.

Rawls, W. (1976). *Summer of the monkeys*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday. **C**

A wonderful read-aloud about a boy who sets out to earn the reward for capturing some prize monkeys that have escaped from the circus. His determination shows in the many ways he attempts to capture them.

Steig, W. (1976). *Abel's island*. Toronto: Collins Publishers. **P**

A delightful story of a wealthy mouse who is swept away in a flood and, through his own persistence and courage, survives alone on an island for a year. Wonderful and challenging vocabulary—a good read-aloud book for second and third graders.

Williams, K. (1990). *Galimoto*. New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard. **P**

A gentle story of persistence. A young boy in an African village sets out to collect wire around his village to make a toy vehicle called a "galimoto." Although he has many setbacks and others try to discourage him, he finally builds his toy and joins the other children in play.

Bravery

Bravery is the quality of mind or spirit that enables one to face danger with self-possession, confidence, and resolution. Some children seem to be naturally brave; they climb to the top of the monkey bars and they jump from the high dive without a second thought.

Others seem naturally timid in situations where the possibility of getting hurt is real. It is difficult for parents to encourage children to be physically brave in some situations because we do not want to put them in danger. How can parents encourage a healthy sense of bravery? Sometimes it's just best to let children develop at their own speed, with constant reassurance that parents are nearby and supporting them. It is also important to let children know that you value "inner bravery"—the kind that tells the truth even if there are consequences; the kind that befriends the other child that no one else will play with. This kind of courage is mental and spiritual and needs wise observation and cultivation by parents.

24. Point Out the Courage

Children's TV shows and books often highlight the child who befriends the outsider. Discuss this with your child. Let him know that you value this sense of compassion and "inner courage" that lets a person do the possibly "uncool" but right thing.

25. Being Brave Inside

The child who tells the truth even though a punishment is likely has learned respect for moral law. He recognizes with childlike trust that justice requires consequences for misdeeds. When children demonstrate this worthy trait, parents must say how proud they are to see such "inner courage" and trustworthiness.

Books about Bravery

Bunting, E. (1994). *Smoky night*. New York: Harcourt Brace. **P**
Striking illustrations highlight a gentle story of community and love in the midst of the Los Angeles riots following the Rodney King verdict.

Cech, J. (1991). *My grandmother's journey*. New York: Bradbury Press. **P**
A story, told from the viewpoint of a young girl, of the brave immigrants who came to this country at the turn of the century.

Coerr, E. (1993). *Sadako*. New York: Putnam. **P**
A sad story of a young girl who is dying of leukemia—the effects of the bombing of Hiroshima during World War II. Her courage and strength make this a beautiful story.

George, J. (1959). *My side of the mountain*. New York: Dutton. **C**
A story of survival and ingenuity about a boy who leaves New York City to live off the land in the Catskill Mountains. Part of the story is told as a diary of his experiences, which adds a sense of reality and helps children relate to the challenges.

Hesse, K. (1993). *Letters from Rifka*. New York: Puffin Books. **C**
Good read-aloud for older readers who are ready to tackle

the effects of war and revolution. Based on the experiences of the author's great-aunt, it is a tale of leaving Russia in 1919 and coming to Ellis Island told through letters of a young girl to her cousin.

Higa, T. (1992). *The girl with the white flag*. New York: Dell **C**
The story of a brave young girl in Japan who searched desperately for her sisters on the battlefields of Okinawa. In this book she tells the true story of her battle to survive amid the horrors of war.

Lowry, L. (1989). *Number the stars*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. **C**
A Danish family befriends and protects a Jewish girl during World War II.

Paulsen, G. (1987). *Hatchet*. New York: Bradbury Press. **C**
A gripping story by an award-winning author about a teenage boy alone in the Canadian wilderness for several weeks. His courage and ingenuity help him to survive.

Paulsen, G. (1993). *Nightjohn*. New York: Delacorte. **C**
A moving and sometimes very graphic description of the treatment of slaves in the pre-Civil War south. A brave and determined slave risks his life to teach other slaves to read. (Parents preview for age-appropriateness; scenes of very harsh treatment of slaves.)

Sperry, A. (1940). *Call it courage*. New York: Collier Books. **C**
A survival story of a young boy who must overcome his fear of the sea in order to return to his home.

Stoltz, M. (1988). *Storm in the night*. New York: HarperCollins. **P**
A kindly grandpa helps his grandson understand that fear is something everyone feels. Grandpa talks about his own fears as a child.

Wells, R. (1988). *Shy Charles*. New York: Dial. **P**
A humorous, delightfully illustrated picture book about overcoming shyness and learning to be brave.

Wisdom

Wisdom is the understanding of what is true, right, or lasting. It might seem unrealistic to think of developing wisdom in children, but they often have simple but profound insights. The ideas discussed in the next activity can help your child develop one aspect of wisdom: Get the complete picture before forming an opinion.

26. The Whole Picture

It's easy to jump to conclusions about a situation without having all the facts. Learning to wait and to search for "the whole picture" is a wise approach to life.

Try this!

Share the picture book of real photographs, *Look, Look, Look* by Tana Hoban. Each page has a hole in it so that part of the next page can be seen. Children love to guess what is on the other side of the hole. One message of this book is that it is sometimes hard to tell what something is when you can see only a small part of it.

Next, read the beautifully illustrated *Seven Blind Mice* by Ed Young. Each of the blind mice feels a different part of an

elephant and makes a very different guess about what this creature actually is. The seventh and wisest of the mice runs all over the elephant until he has "the whole picture." Discuss the message of this book with your child. You can also emphasize the point by playing a game of "blindfold" in which several children can feel but not see different parts of a doll or stuffed animal, but one child can feel the whole doll. You can make this idea more meaningful by telling the story of an incident at school or at play in which some of the information is missing.

Books about Wisdom

Franklin, K. (1992). *The old, old man and the very little boy*. New York: Atheneum. **P**

A delightful and thoughtful story of a young African boy who asks an old man to tell him stories. In the course of the book he becomes the old man and can reflect on the cycle of life.

McGovern, A. (1967). *Too much noise*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. **P**

A wonderful read-aloud picture book with animal sounds and repeated phrases that children can join in reading with you. By adding a good deal more noise, the wise man in the story helps Peter realize that a little noise is normal and that he should be grateful for his home.

Merriam, E. (1991). *The wise woman and her secret*. New York: Simon and Schuster. **P**

A great lesson in being wise and curious is taught in this little picture book. While traveling along a road, a young girl attends to many things that others ignore and in so doing shows that she is wisest of all.

Sheppard, J. (1993). *I know a bridge*. New York: Macmillan. **P**

A simple book with a wise and open-ended conclusion that helps children see the "bridges" between people.

Yolen, J. (1991). *All those secrets of the world*. Boston: Little, Brown. **P**

Touching story of a young girl whose father is a soldier off fighting in the war. She learns patience and wisdom as she waits for him, and she sacrifices to support the war effort.

Zolotow, C. (1995). *When the wind stops*. New York: HarperCollins. **P**

A book based on the innocent but difficult questions children often ask: Why does the day have to end? Where does the sun go? The parents' thoughtful answers show the cycle of life.

Patience

Patience is the capacity for calm endurance—the ability to bear affliction with equanimity. American society is an instant-gratification culture. We are used to faxes, fast food, and little time to spend appreciating nature, which often has a slower pace to accomplish its goals. All children can benefit from observing and practicing this ancient virtue.

27. Spider Watching

Many creatures in the natural environment spend a great deal of time doing what nature requires of them in order to exist.

They provide wonderful examples of patience and the work ethic.

Try this!

Find a spider building a web. Spend some time watching this miracle of the natural world. Help your child see how patient and dedicated the spider is in doing the work she has been given to do. Explain that each of us has been given tasks to learn and goals to accomplish and that patience will help us to achieve them.

Books about Patience

Carle, E. (1984). *The very busy spider*. New York: Philomel. **P**
A delightful story about a spider who is so busy building her web that she ignores her friends' suggestions to play.

Carle, E. (1990). *The very quiet cricket*. New York: Philomel. **P**
A beautifully illustrated book about a little cricket who has not yet learned to chirp. He attempts to greet other insects but he can't make a sound. Finally his own special chirp comes forth.

Kraus, R. (1971). *Leo the late bloomer*. New York: Simon and Schuster. **P**
A gentle story about a little "late-blooming" lion. "Patience," says Mother lion. "A watched bloomer never blooms."

Sharmat, M. (1991). *I'm the best*. New York: Holiday House. **P**
A little dog is adopted and let go by many different families. He doesn't give up as he waits for just the right one, and eventually his patience is rewarded.

Forgiveness

Forgiveness means renouncing anger or resentment against others. Adults as well as children know how difficult it is to forgive when we feel we have been wronged, but often forgiveness is the only road back to harmony and joy in the family and in our friendships.

28. Object Lesson

Forgiveness is best taught by helping children apply the Golden Rule: *Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.*

Try this!

The next time your child does something that requires forgiveness on your part, take the time to help her make connections between how she feels about her misdeed, how much she wants your forgiveness, and her own forgiving of someone else. The next time little brother breaks one of her toys or loses a valued treasure, remind big sister of the time she was forgiven.

29. Role Playing

It is less emotional and tense if forgiveness is discussed at a time when everyone is calm.

Try this!

Have each child list things that happen that need forgiveness—things that friends, parents, or siblings might do. On the table, have a stone and a sponge. Help the child understand that *not forgiving* is like the stone (hard, cold, inflexible); *forgiving* is like the sponge (soft, flexible, movable). Then discuss how forgiving could be made easier in each situation: for example, if the person says, "I'm sorry."

Books about Forgiveness

Browne, A. (1986). *Piggybook*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. **P**

A humorous book for any age about a mother who works all evening at home ("Is dinner ready yet?") and works outside the home as well. Her decision to leave results in a humorous disaster for father and two sons. Eventually there is resolution and all is forgiven. Hilarious illustrations add much to the story.

Clifton, L. (1983). *Everett Anderson's goodbye*. New York: Henry Holt. **P**

A larger sense of forgiveness winds through this little story. A young boy loses his father, and it takes some grieving and "forgiving" of the natural course of life for him to go on.

Sharmat, M. (1977). *I'm terrific*. New York: Holiday House. **P**

A "perfect" bear learns about making friends. His attempts separate him further from them. In the end they forgive him and he learns to forgive himself. Kind portrait of a wise mother, too.

Surat, M. (1983). *Angel child, dragon child*. Milwaukee: Raintree. **P**

A Vietnamese girl who misses her mother is treated cruelly by a classmate. Finally they are both disciplined. When she realizes he is crying, she shows great compassion and forgiveness and offers him a cookie. A discussion about her mother follows, and they gain new respect for each other.

PART TWO

Helping Your Child Develop as a Family Member

Love of Family

Children need to know that they are part of a loving family. Even if everyone is busy with individual activities, there are many ways to let children know that they are important to you. Part of the message in activities for families is that "our family works together as a team" in order to help each other as well as relatives and friends.

30. Family Log

Families can maintain close daily sharing even with two parents working outside the home and children busy with their own activities. It takes some effort, but it's worth it.

Try this!

Buy a notebook and call it the "family log." It becomes a record of daily events and thoughts of your family. Everyone is invited to write something in it each day for the rest of the family to read.

31. Family Notes

Leave notes for your children—on the pillow, in the lunch box, on a message board in the kitchen, on the TV screen. Encourage them to write back. Let them know you are thinking about them: "Good luck with the math test." "Pizza for dinner." "Hope you have a terrific day!"

32. Cooking Together

Cooking with your children is a wonderful way to achieve many important family goals. Reading recipes, measuring, and timing the finished product in the oven are all ways to develop children's reading and math skills. Trusting children to prepare something the whole family will enjoy helps them to feel a part of the team and to feel worthy.

33. Girls' Night Out/Guys' Night Out!

Children sometimes need the special attention that one parent can offer away from the daily round of family routine.

Try this!

Once a month, arrange for a "Mother-Daughter" or "Father-Son" outing. ("Mother-Son" or "Father-Daughter" is great, too!) Plan the evening with your child. Allow plenty of time for talking and sharing—sitting together at a movie is good, but be sure there is "quality" time for talk before or after.

Books about Love of Family

Boyd, L. (1990). *Sam is my half brother*. New York: Viking. **P**
A young girl learns to deal with the remarriage of her parents and with a new half brother.

Clifton, L. (1978). *Everett Anderson's nine month long*. New York: Holt. **P**
A tender story about a boy whose mother is expecting a baby. Everett is having a hard time adjusting to the idea. There are several good "Everett" books by this author that focus on family love.

Crews, D. (1991). *Big mama's*. New York: William Morrow. **P**
A terrific "going-to-grandma's" book. The family takes a train to Grandma's, and the reader delights in going through the house with the children to see that everything is just as it was last year.

de Paola, T. (1981). *Now one foot, now the other*. New York: Putnam. **P**
A moving story about a little boy named Bobby and his grandfather. Grandfather teaches Bobby to walk. Then,

after Grandfather has a stroke, the roles are reversed. The innocence and faith of children shine brightly in this one.

Fox, M. (1988). *Koala Lou*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. **P**
A book about a little koala whose mother always affirms her love for her no matter what the circumstances.

Hunt, I. (1976). *The lottery rose*. New York: Scribner's. **C**
A good read-aloud about an abused child who learns to love a new family. (Parents: Be sure to preview this book.)

Joosse, B. (1991). *Mama, do you love me?* San Francisco: Chronicle Books. **P**
A little girl questions her mother's love in a repetitive question-response pattern so appropriate in books for young children. She learns that her mother does indeed love her. The responses refer to animals common to the culture of the Arctic regions.

Jukes, M. (1984). *Like Jake and me*. New York: Knopf. **P**
A good stepfather book about learning to love a new family. Stepson and stepfather finally find a basis for a relationship when the stepson helps his new stepfather overcome a fear of spiders.

Leach, N. (1993). *My wicked stepmother*. New York: Macmillan. **P**
A touching story about a little boy who has a new stepmother. She tries everything to win him over. Finally he learns to respond with affection.

MacLachlan, P. (1985). *Sarah, plain and tall*. New York: Harper & Row. **C**
A short chapter book about a real mail-order bride. Two motherless children and their father anxiously await the arrival of Sarah and hope that she will decide to stay with them. Beautiful, simple dialogue and touching letter writing.

Miles, M. (1971). *Annie and the old one*. Boston: Little, Brown. **P**
A Native American setting for the story of Annie, who resists the idea that her grandmother is going to die. Lovely treatment of a difficult subject.

Munsch, R. (1986). *Love you forever*. Scarborough, Ontario: Firefly Books. **P**
A tender book about mother and son, generations of family, and the love that continues and is passed on to each new generation.

Paterson, K. (1978). *The Great Gilly Hopkins*. New York: Crowell. **C**
The story of a feisty foster child and the foster mother who loves her and helps her to learn how to love a new family.

Rylant, C. (1987). *Birthday presents*. New York: Orchard **P**
A touching little picture book that presents birthdays of a loved child through the photo album.

Rylant, C. (1992). *Missing May*. New York: Orchard. **C**
A good read-aloud about the death of a loved relative and how the family learns to carry on and appreciate more the family members left behind.

Rylant, C. (1985). *The relatives came*. New York: Bradbury Press. **P**
A great family story set in the mountains of Virginia, told with a wonderful rhythm of language and expression.

Rylant, C. (1982). *When I was young in the mountains*. New York: Dutton. **P**
An extension of *The Relatives Came* with a variety of stories and poems that capture the feeling of mountain family life.

Sharmat, M. (1977). *I'm terrific*. New York: Holiday House. **P**
A picture book about Jason Everett Bear, who needs to learn to think for himself. A loving mother bear helps him to "become his own bear." About friendship, self-concept, and family love.

Making Peace

Making peace means settling the disputes of others and learning how to live in harmony with other family members, friends, and strangers. In an increasingly violent and aggressive society, skills in peacemaking are absolutely necessary. Many emotions can lead to tension and conflict: anger, irritability, and jealousy, to name a few. Becoming peaceable does not mean eliminating emotions but rather learning to control them. Parents can encourage their children to learn how to negotiate quarrels without resorting to violence.

34. Monitoring the Home Environment

Parents need to show calm and control in their own relationships with each other and their children. Children can't learn to be peacemakers in a home where anger, yelling, intimidation, and physical violence are demonstrated by parents. If you struggle with keeping your own emotions under control, make peacemaking a family project. Practice together to discuss things calmly and to find other ways to handle disagreement.

Try this!

If a quarrel is developing at home and emotions are running high, excuse yourself and say, "I'm going outside for a few

minutes to calm down. I'm getting angry. I'll be back when I'm more in control." At a time when the family is calm and happy, set up some guidelines for what to do when someone is very angry: go to your room, go outside, go for a walk, count to ten.

35. The Time-Out Bench

When children seem on the verge of yelling, hitting, or losing their tempers, they need some enforced quiet time to calm down and think about alternatives to losing control.

Try this!

Have a soft chair or bench where a child must sit while calming down. Help them to understand that their feelings of anger are not wrong—everyone gets angry sometimes. It is what they do when they are angry that gets them into trouble. If they can maintain a peaceful attitude, they are far more likely to solve their problem wisely.

36. Peace Table

Children need to learn to accept responsibility for the consequences of their decisions. They have their own strong sense of right and wrong and will likely want to assign blame for many incidents. You may want to agree or disagree with their judgments about the rightness or wrongness of their friends' or siblings' actions. It is helpful to establish and refer to your "house" rules in order to discuss the dispute. Have the children help you develop some rules for keeping the peace in your home. Keep your list short and simple. Here is one simple rule that covers a lot of moral ground: "I will not hurt anyone on the outside or the inside." Having established at the roundtable whether the actions in question are in accord with the rules, it is important to set the tone for achieving peace: the parties must forgive and move toward solutions.

Try this!

When there is a disagreement among your children, invite them to the peace table. Each child has a turn at telling what happened. Each child then tells how he or she could have acted differently or more peacefully and then proposes a solution that will be fair to all. The children must stay at the table until the dispute is peacefully resolved.

37. Role Play "Explosive" Situations

Children need practice in controlling themselves and thinking of alternatives to violent, angry behavior. It helps to give them some opportunity to "try out" their peacemaking skills in pretend situations.

Try this!

Write out several role-play situations that are common in your child's everyday life at home and at school. Write each situation on a separate sheet of paper and put all of them in a jar or bowl. It becomes a game as children pull out a slip of

paper, you describe the situation, and they act it out, showing how they can use their peacemaking skills to resolve the problem.

38. Monitoring TV

Children learn a great deal about human relations and how people get along by watching the television. Any parent who has a male child who watches television will know about Ninja Turtles, X-Men, Power Rangers and other aggressive "might-makes-right" characters that children want to emulate. Some parents do not allow children to watch violent children's shows on TV. That would certainly be the first line of defense in helping your child become a peace-loving adult. Other parents feel that their children will watch the shows at friends' houses anyway, so why not use the shows to teach some lessons?

Try this!

Videotape one of your children's shows so that you can stop it at any time and not miss the action. Pause at places where other methods for resolving the problems could be tried. Discuss with the child the alternatives to violent action and why these would be preferred in our everyday relations with others.

Books about Making Peace

Anzaldinua, G. (1993). *Friends from the other side*. San Francisco: Children's Book Press. **P** (Also in Spanish: *Amigos del otro lado.*)

A young Mexican boy and his mother have recently crossed the Rio Grande into Texas. As they search for a new life, trouble follows them. A brave young Mexican-American befriends and helps them.

Babbitt, N. (1969). *The search for delicious*. New York: Farrar. **C**
A fantasy in which a king is creating a new dictionary. He asks one of his subjects to go throughout the kingdom in search of a good definition of "delicious." The many different definitions lead to an uproar in the kingdom. A mermaid comes up with a good solution for bringing peace back to the kingdom.

Blos, J. (1987). *Old Henry*. New York: William Morrow. **P**
A touching picture book about an older man whose neighbors do not understand him. He seems to create a messy nuisance for everyone. By the end of the story, everyone has a new appreciation of what Henry has to offer, and he makes peace with his neighbors.

Durrell, A. & Sachs, M., eds. (1990). *The big book for peace*. New York: E.P. Dutton Children's Books. **C**
A wonderful collection of poems, short stories, and letters about peacemaking. Something for every level of grade-school children.

Filopovic, Z. (1994). *Zlata's diary*. New York: Penguin. **C**
"War has nothing to do with humanity!" Zlata cries out from the pages of this amazing diary of a young girl in war-torn Sarajevo. Written with childlike innocence and wisdom, a good read-aloud for upper elementary grades.

Fradin, D. (1992). *Hiawatha: Messenger of peace*. Macmillan/Margaret K. McElderry. **C**
A biography of a legendary Iroquois leader appropriate for children in the early primary grades. The author uses factual information about the Iroquois to recreate the role of Hiawatha as a peacemaker between the five tribes of the Iroquois nation.

Morimoto, J. (1990). *My Hiroshima*. New York: Puffin Books. **P**
A graphic but beautifully illustrated book about the effects of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and the memorials that are held to remember the victims. (Parents preview)

Near, H. (1993). *The great peace march*. New York: Holt. **P**
A uniquely illustrated book that includes everyone in efforts for peace: "Peace can begin with just one heart." Includes a song with score for peace at the end.

Scholes, K. (1990). *Peace begins with you*. Boston: Little, Brown. **P**
A simple picture book about each person's responsibility to be peaceable and gentle.

Surat, M. (1983). *Angel child, dragon child*. Milwaukee: Raintree. **P**
An interesting book about a young Vietnamese girl in an American school. She has been separated from her mother and feels alone and unloved. She finally makes peace with a boy who has been unkind to her. Everyone learns a lesson.

Wood, D. (1992). *Old turtle*. Duluth, MN: Pfeifer-Hamilton. **P**
A different kind of peace book that promotes understanding of the earth and of each other.

Courtesy

Polite behavior and a gracious manner have been called the lubricants of society. Much strife and ill will could be avoided by simple good manners toward family, friends, and strangers.

39. Table Manners

Nothing undermines the harmony and joy of home more than bad table manners. Much of the socializing and civilizing of children occurs at the table. Love and respect are expressed when family members listen to each other's comments, make polite requests for items at the table, and express gratitude for the meal provided.

Try this!

Establish some simple rules for meals. For example: (1) No one begins to eat until all are served. (2) Requests for table items are preceded by "please" and followed by "thank you." (3) If you must interrupt someone who is speaking, say "excuse me." Parents can set a good example of dinner conversation by inquiring about each child's activities that day, by telling about their own daily routine, and by discussing the news, books, or movies.

40. Lessons in Hospitality

Learning to be sociable and to embrace others in their thoughts is a wonderful gift that parents can give their children. Encourage your children to think of your home as a place where others are welcomed.

Try this!

Invite friends or relatives every so often and let children help decide what will make guests feel at home and comfortable. What can the children contribute to a pleasant evening? They can learn to greet guests politely, introduce themselves, shake hands, take coats, show guests to the living room or family room. Children can help to prepare for the evening by fixing and serving snacks. Children should not become the center of attention for the evening, but rather they should be learning to help guests feel welcomed and loved.

Books about Courtesy

Henkes, K. (1990). *Julius, the baby of the world*. New York: Greenwillow. **P**

Delightful mouse characters face the challenge of a new baby in the family. The sister learns how to respond with kindness and courtesy to the new baby through a number of trips to the "uncooperative chair." A humorous book for parents and young children who are struggling with sibling rivalry.

Joslin, S. (1961). *What do you do, dear?* New York: Young Scott Books. **P**

Joslin, S. (1958). *What do you say, dear?* New York: Young Scott Books. **P**

Two humorous books for young children. The stories use animals and improbable situations to reinforce the appropriate use of polite language such as "Excuse me" and "No, thank you."

Smith, R. (1984). *The war with Grandpa*. New York: Delacorte. **C**

A chapter book for older children based on the very roots of courtesy and manners: love and concern for others. A young boy responds with anger and distress when Grandpa moves in and takes over his room.

Avoiding Stereotypes

The quality of being just, impartial, and fair—regardless of gender—is a virtue whose time has come. Children have many talents that don't necessarily fit the fading stereotypes of what boys do and what girls do. The goal for parents is to help children think of themselves and their potential in a balanced way—to give children as many opportunities as possible to find out what they enjoy and what they are good at. Parents also want to help children see that many jobs around the home and in the workplace can be done equally well by men and women. Fairness and balance are the goals: If both parents work outside the home, then it is fair that both parents work at home.

41. Images of Men and Women on TV

Although television contains many poor images of family life in which family members do not seem to love and care for each other, it can provide a means for talking about the roles of family members. It is helpful for children to hear why your family works the way it does.

Try this!

Choose a family show that has at least a few features in common with your own family. Watch the show together and

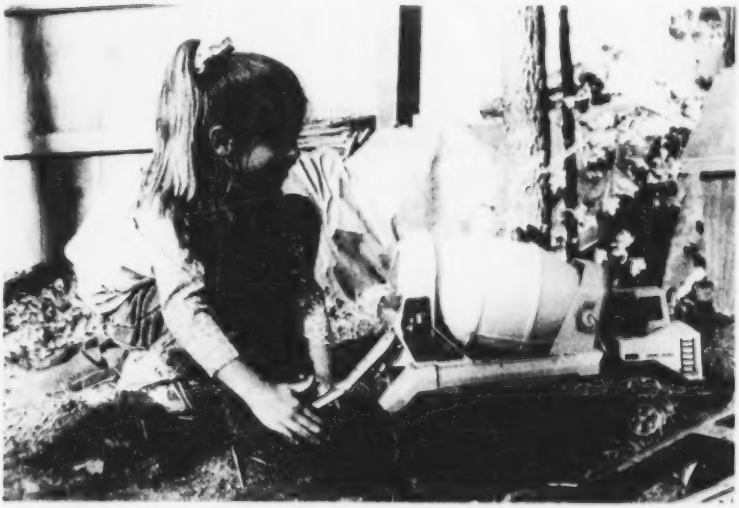
notice how this family is like yours and how it is different. Seeing men care for young children and women operating machinery or fixing cars helps children understand that the only limitations on our lives are the ones we impose on ourselves for various reasons: tradition, religious beliefs, convenience, and so forth.

42. Non-Sexist Toys

When you buy toys for your children, choose those that represent some balance or neutrality. Girls don't always want to play with dolls, and boys don't always have to play with trucks.

Try this!

Vary the toys that are available for your children to play with, letting children know: "You will appreciate all your toys more if you do not have the same toys out all of the time." Sometimes, set out only a housekeeping area with dolls, dishes,



and dress-up. At other times, put out only trucks, trains, and building materials. If this becomes standard practice, with the understanding that all toys are to be used and appreciated, there will be little resistance and more opportunity for children to express a wide variety of interests.

43. Cooking as a Family Affair

It is important to challenge some of the typical ways we have managed our households for years. Typically, Mom did the cooking and cleaning and Dad earned money outside the home. If your family work patterns are traditional in this way, think about at least one day a week or weekends in which cooking and cleaning are family affairs. Almost seventy percent of women work outside the home now, and children should recognize that managing a household takes the participation of *everyone*.

44. Family Jobs for Boys or Girls

Children can easily recognize that most household chores can be done by men or women, boys or girls.

Try this!

In preparation for this activity, read several of the titles listed below, such as *The Terrible Thing That Happened at Our House*, *Piggybook*, and *The Man Who Kept House*. After reading, help your children list all the indoor and outdoor chores they can do or are required to do. Then talk about whether it matters if a girl or a boy does the job. Ask some questions: Are girls better for certain jobs? Are boys better for other jobs? Ask the children to defend their reasoning, helping to correct their thinking when necessary.

Books about Avoiding Stereotypes

Blaine, M. (1984). *The terrible thing that happened at our house*. New York: Four Winds Press. **P**

In this delightful story, Mom gets a job outside the home and the kids react negatively: no more hand-packed lunches, no story time, no fun. But soon family members share their feelings and work out ways to have a "normal" family life again.

Browne, A. (1986). *Piggybook*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. **P**

A great picture book about a family in which the dad and two sons seem to expect the mom not only to work outside the home but also to be responsible for all household chores. Hilarious illustrations, in which the wallpaper, doorknobs, and ultimately the dad and two sons gradually turn into pigs, help to get the point across that no one in the family should be taken advantage of; each should do his or her fair share to keep the household running. A happy, surprise ending.

de Paola, T. (1979). *Oliver Button is a sissy*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. **P**

Gentle little book about a boy whose major talent and joy is dancing. Eventually his schoolmates learn to appreciate his unique abilities and no longer call him a sissy.

Hague, K. & Hague, M. (1981). *The man who kept house*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. **P**

A farmer is convinced that his work in the fields is much more difficult than his wife's work at home. He trades places with her for one disastrous day! Good lesson about respecting all types of work!

Hines, A. (1986). *Daddy makes the best spaghetti*. New York: Clarion. **P**

Good examples of successfully changing roles in the family, decision making, and problem solving. When mom takes a job outside the home, dad and son spend more time doing things together, like making a great spaghetti sauce!

Munsch, R. (1980). *The paper bag princess*. Toronto: Annick Press. **P**

A humorous tale about a princess who sets out to save a very fussy prince, who criticizes her appearance after she rescues him. She decides he isn't worth it after all! Lesson in appreciating qualities of character over appearance or status in life.

Paterson, K. (1992). *The king's equal*. New York: HarperCollins. **P**

A rather lengthy picture book in which a chauvinistic king learns humility and the value of a woman who is his equal in character and wisdom.

Stamm, C. (1990). *Three strong women: A tall tale from Japan*. New York: Viking. **P**

A mother and grandmother teach a famous wrestler a lesson by retelling a Japanese folktale. He learns that real strength has little to do with muscle size and that humility, although it appears to be a weakness, is actually a virtue of great strength.

Cooperation

The family setting is a natural one in which to learn teamwork. Working together to build a treehouse, clean the yard, plant a garden, make cookies, and engage in other simple activities of daily life

teaches children that, as the old saying goes, "Many hands make light work." In addition to sharing the workload, children learn to cooperate, do their part, solve problems, and share the satisfaction of a completed task. Most tasks will require parental supervision, so this isn't necessarily a time saver for parents; rather, it teaches the values you want your children to learn.

45. Kitchen Detail

Children can assume responsibility for simple household tasks that give them a sense of teamwork.

Try this!

Assign each child a particular task before, during, and after meals. For example, one sets the table, one clears the table, one washes the dishes or rinses them and loads the dishwasher. These chores can rotate weekly. Simple cooking chores can also be assigned.

46. Yard Work

Many families spend time in their yards, mowing, planting, raking, watering. Although it might seem quicker and simpler to do the job yourself while the children play, these tasks provide opportunities to teach the values of teamwork and shared responsibility.

Try this!

List the yard work tasks that your children are capable of doing with some instruction. Let them sign up for one or two they would like to learn to do well and make yard work a family teamwork time. Without nagging and with some patience, insist on a job well done.

Books about Cooperation

Blaine, M. (1984). *The terrible thing that happened at our house*. New York: Four Winds Press. **P**

In this delightful story, Mom gets a job outside the home and the kids react negatively: no more hand-packed lunches, no story time, no fun. But soon family members share their feelings and work out ways to have a "normal" family life again.

Carris, J. (1982). *When the boys ran the house*. New York: Lippincott. **P**

A wartime setting in which mother must go to work and the boys must learn to do all the housework.

Clever, V. & Clever, B. (1969). *Where the lilies bloom*. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott. **C**

An older book that gives a heartwarming look at a family of children who are determined to stay together after both parents have died. Cooperation, teamwork, and love are the strong messages in this book.

Ernst, L. (1983). *Sam Johnson and the blue ribbon quilt*. New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard. **P**

A book about teamwork and equity between men and women. Sam discovers that he likes to sew after he has the opportunity to mend a pigpen awning. When he asks to join his wife's quilting club, he at first meets with disbelief and ridicule.

Hayles, K. & Fuge, C. (1993). *Whale is stuck*. New York: Simon and Schuster. **P**

A community has to learn to work together in order to save a whale that is stuck on their beach.

My Place in the World

All of us need to learn our place in the family, in the community, and in history. It's easy for children to think of themselves as of no consequence or to think the world revolves around them. Both confidence-building times and times of discipline help children find balance and a healthy perspective on their roles and importance. They need to see their relationship to others in the family, the neighborhood, the country, and the world.

47. My Place in Time

Learning to see the larger picture of time and history helps children understand that they are part of an ongoing civilization to which they can make positive contributions.

Try this!

Make a time line with your children. It is more fun and more instructive if you can get several generations to do it. On the far left end of the time line, show the year in which your child was born; give the current year on the far right. In between, mark off the years. Then help your child recall special events to add to the time line: first tooth, the day he walked for the first time, first bicycle, the day he learned to whistle, camping trips, 4-H Fairs, the first book he read, and so forth. Then make your own time line, starting with your birth and showing your children's births somewhere in the middle. If Grandma or Grandpa will join in the fun, they can begin with their birth and then show their children's and grandchildren's births on their time lines, among other special events. All the time lines displayed together give children a sense of the cycle of life and their own place in time.

48. My Place in the Community

Your family may have lived in the same house or on the same property for 100 years, or you may have just moved there two months ago. Either way, it is fun and inspiring to find out who lived on that very spot before you.

Try this!

Take a trip to the county recorder's office to see the abstract for the property you live on. It can give you lots of interesting

information: who has owned the property in the past 200 years, if it was part of a large farm or wooded area, when it was platted as a subdivision. Town records in the local library may have pictures of the way the town used to look. History books will have information about the Native Americans that lived in your area 150–200 years ago. A local historical museum may have additional information about the history of your town.

49. My Place in the Family

Many families keep photo albums and have pictures dating back several generations. Children love to hear about the day they were born or "when you were little" stories. A walk through the photo album is a good way to start sharing stories and to help children understand where they fit into the long line of relatives that came before them.

Try this!

Make a family tree with everyone's picture on it. For young children, three generations is probably enough—it is quite a challenge for little ones to realize that Grandpa was once a baby!

50. My Important Place

Places hold memories for us, and thinking about why they are important places gives a feeling of warmth and security.

Try this!

Have your child draw a floor plan of your home or Grandma's house or another place where she spends a lot of time. Make the drawing fairly large. Then list inside each room some important events or conversations that happened there. Pick one of the most important of all and talk about it or write about it.

51. Time Capsules

One easy and exciting way to help children understand the passing of time and their own growth is to prepare time capsules. Because it requires the capacity to remember and note changes, this activity works best with children over six years of age.

Try this!

At your child's birthday party, make a time capsule. Include a favorite book title, favorite toy, candy, gum wrapper, tickets to an event that was important to the child that year, a picture of the child, and other items that would tell about the child's interests and feelings at the time. Then decide how long to

"bury" the time capsule. It should be long enough to allow some changes in looks and interests by the time the capsule is opened. Often the next birthday is enough time lapse for you and your child to see change and growth.

Books about "My Place in the World"

Baylor, B. (1972). *When clay sings*. New York: Scribner. **P**
A book written from the point of view of a Native American parent telling children to treat old pieces of pottery with respect because each tells a story from long ago. "Each one sings in its own way," telling of hunters, of women making bowls, and of children playing with lizards and rabbits in days gone by. It is a beautiful poem of respect for the past and those who lived before us. Plain earth-colored illustrations fit the subject perfectly.

Burton, V. (1978). *The little house*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. **P**
This book has been around for many years. It's the story of a little house that sees the city grow up around it. Finally, it has to move. A gentle book of change.

Carle, E. (1990). *The tiny seed*. Saxonville, MA: Picture Book Studio Ltd. **P**
A tiny seed is carried by the wind and escapes the fate of many other larger seeds until it finally lands in a good spot and produces a magnificent sunflower. This will remind some readers of the story of "The Sower" in the Bible.

Dragonwagon, C. (1990). *Home place*. New York: Macmillan. **P**
A poetic book about a family out for a hike. They discover the foundations of an old house that once stood there. Several small artifacts help them imagine the other family and the life they had many years before.

Fleischman, P. (1991). *The borning room*. New York: HarperCollins. **C**

A good read-aloud for upper elementary school children. It begins with the birth of the main female character in a borning room in a farm in Ohio. The major events of the story occur in this room and culminate as the main character awaits her own passing in this room after a rewarding and fulfilling life.

Frasier, D. (1991). *On the day you were born*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. **P**

A delightful, award-winning book that captures a feeling of the gentle welcome of the earth to the newborn baby. The constant refrain "on the day you were born" is magic to the young listener.

Garland, S. (1993). *The lotus seed*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. **P**

A picture book that chronicles the changes in a Vietnamese woman's life because of war. The "lotus seed" embodies a sense of family tradition and the importance of passing on a legacy to the next generation.

Goble, P. (1993). *Beyond the ridge*. New York: Aladdin Books. **P**

Beautifully poetic book about dying, written in a Native American style. It talks of the path beyond this life and of the Great Spirit and the Spirit World.

Hirst, R. (1990). *My place in space*. New York: Orchard. **P**

A wonderfully exciting picture book that shows our place in the galaxy. From getting on a bus near his own home to seeing the relation of the earth to the solar system, to the Milky Way, and even to other galaxies, the young hero gets the big picture! It's a mind-stretching book that helps children see their "place in space."

Hoberman, M. (1988). *A house is a house for me*. New York: Puffin Books. **P**

This book contains much useful information about the dwelling places of animals and humans of different cultures, shared in beautiful rhyme: "A hill is a house for an ant, an ant. A hive is a house for a bee. A hole is a house for a mole or a mouse, and a house is a house for me." Imaginative last few pages that parents can easily extend into a game with young children: "My hat is a house for my _____ (head)."

Johnston, T. (1988). *Yonder*. New York: Dial. **P**

Lovely sing-song picture book that shows the bittersweet cycle of life in a small country town: birth, growing up, marriage, work, death.

Lyon, G. (1993). *Dreamplace*. New York: Orchard. **P**

A book that describes a modern girl's imagined world of the Anasazi cliff dwellers in Mesa Verde. She creates a vision of what tribal life might have been like.

Lyon, G. (1992). *Who came down that road?* New York: Orchard. **P**

A creative way to look at history, narrated from the same spot in the road over time.

PART THREE

Helping Your Child Develop as a Student

Understanding the Importance of Schooling

Children's success at school can be greatly increased when parents take an active interest in school events and school work. Most parents today want basic values taught at school as well as in the home. Similarly, most teachers want parents to reinforce the value of reading, writing, and schooling at home.

52. Daily Story Time

Nothing improves your child's chances of becoming a successful student more than showing her the value of books; just telling her to read won't do it. You must read to her and show your own enjoyment of a great story, your own sadness during a sad story, your own fear during a scary story. That excitement about books begins by reading to your child regularly—every day! We want to read to children while they are still young enough to want to imitate what they are seeing and hearing.

Try this!

Visit the library with your child and pick out several books. Read a few pages together, look at the pictures, and then decide which ones to take home. Keep a file box or notebook of all the books you read together. (*The New Read-Aloud Handbook* by Jim Trelease is an excellent resource for book ideas and hints for reading aloud).

53. "I Can Decide" Journals

Children can learn to make good decisions at home and at school. Writing down and reflecting on decisions can help children see the role of action and consequence in their own experiences. They will learn that they have some control over their daily lives through good decision making.

Try this!

Encourage children to keep a "decision-making journal" for a week. The child should record several decisions a day and the consequences of those decisions. At the end of the week, sit down and discuss with your child whether the decisions were good ones and why. Ask how they and others were affected by their decisions.

54. A Listening Game

Children spend approximately half of their school day listening—to stories, to factual materials, and, most often, to directions for activities and lessons. Yet we do very little to develop children's listening skills other than repeating instructions over and over. You can help your child practice paying attention and following instructions carefully.

Try this!

Before you sit down with your child, draw a simple object that you know your child can draw. Then develop a set of directions for drawing the object. The child will not know ahead of time what the object is but will have to listen carefully to hear and follow all the directions. For example, a young child who can draw a square can probably follow these directions: Put the point of your pencil in the upper left hand corner of your paper. Draw a straight line across the top to the upper right-hand corner of the paper. Without lifting your pencil, draw a straight line to the bottom right-hand corner. Again without lifting your pencil, draw a straight line to the bottom left-hand corner of the paper. Again, without lifting your pencil, draw a straight line to the point where you started. What have you drawn? A square or rectangle (depending on the shape of your paper). Keep your directions very specific but not descriptive: not "Draw two eyes" but "Draw two circles in the upper half of the large circle."

55. Field Trip Stories

Parents can learn a great deal about their children's habits and school conduct by accompanying the class on a field trip. More important, you will show your child that you value school events and the learning that occurs during them.

Try this!

Take a camera and record the event in pictures. After the pictures are developed, make a book with your child—"Our Trip to the Apple Orchard." Help your child develop the written text for the book based on the pictures you took. You will not only relive a happy event with your child; you will also provide a time of reflection on an important learning experience.

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A variation:

If it is not possible to take a camera along, then take some notes and later write a report together about your experience and what you learned.

56. Look at That Homework!

Parents can usually assume that teachers are doing their jobs and giving their children a good education. However, the efforts of the teacher will be much more effective if parents take an interest in what goes on at school.

Try this!

If the teacher is not sending home a folder with your children's homework weekly, then send a folder with your child and ask that papers be brought home daily or at least weekly. Take the time to sit down with your child and ask her about each paper and what she learned.

57. Handy Read-Alouds

When you have pre-schoolers, you probably spend a lot of time waiting in line or waiting at the doctor's office, etc. This time can be used for reading.

Try this!

Keep books handy in your travel bag, purse, glove compartment, everywhere! Then read while you are waiting. Besides keeping the children calm and quiet, reading at odd moments during the day shows that you value reading and that it is an enjoyable activity. This effort on your part will do far more toward your child's success in school than allowing children to play video games or engage in other forms of passive entertainment.

58. Menu Mania

Most young children need to see that reading is a practical activity that adults engage in every day. If your family eats out regularly, as many families do today, make a practice of gathering up menus (if they are free) to keep at home.

Try this!

Before the family decides where to eat this week, take out the menus and have your children read them aloud. Listen to the choices and then decide where to go.

59. Write Your Own Agenda

Children need to learn how to plan, to budget their time, and to carry out tasks in order to become more self-sufficient and conscientious students.

Try this!

On Friday evening, sit down with your children and help them plan their weekend. Allow time for meals, chores, fun, entertainment. This activity will help children recognize that some tasks are not optional and must go into the agenda first. They will also see that sometimes one must choose among a variety of activities.

60. Make an "I Can Read" Book

Young children can "read" before they go to school, with a little help and encouragement from parents. "Environmental print," as it has been called, includes all the signs that children see around town and come to recognize because of what they mean. Children's first reading experiences are usually with this kind of print.

Try this!

Keep candy wrappers, cereal boxes, toothpaste boxes, fast-food wrappers and napkins, and any other kind of print that your child can recognize. Create a book using blank paper and a three-ring binder. Have your child help you paste one wrapper or sign on each page. Make the book as big as you want, and watch the happy faces as your children "read" this book to you. As confidence grows, watch for signs around town that the child can begin to identify: stop signs, fast-food restaurants, etc.

61. Critical Thinking: Books and Movies

When children learn to think critically—to question, analyze, and make comparisons—then they will be better able to succeed in school tasks that require a thoughtful approach to problem solving.

Try this!

At your local library, find a children's book that has been made into a movie. (It should be a book your child has not read and a movie she has not seen). For example, younger children can listen to or read *Sarah, Plain and Tall* by Patricia MacLachlan, which has been made into a TV movie and is available on video. Older children can read *Ramona* by Beverly Cleary; there is also a video version available in many public library children's sections. Read the book together, a chapter or two each night. When you have finished the book, rent the movie and compare. Keep a notebook handy to record differences and similarities.

62. Good Question!

Parents sometimes have a difficult time asking questions that actually get a response from children about their day at school. Even so, it is possible to let your child know that you really are interested.

Try this!

What stories did the teacher read to you this week? What did you like about those books? What book are you reading on your own right now? What do you like about it? What kinds of math problems are you doing now? Do you understand them? What was the best thing that happened at school today? What was the worst thing? What was the funniest thing? Don't ask these all in one day! If your child is not used to answering questions about school, you'll need to ease into it and keep trying.

63. Word a Day

One sure sign of a good education is a good vocabulary. Both you and your child can build vocabulary with this easy activity.

Try this!

Each day at supper or another time when the family is together, everyone bring a word that is new for you or unusual or special that you heard or read that day. Keep a dictionary handy to look up meanings you are not sure of. This may be slow getting started, but if your children know you'll be expecting to hear new words each day, they will begin to notice and "gather" them during the day.

Books about the Importance of Schooling

Bunting, E. (1989). *The Wednesday surprise*. New York: Clarion. **P**

A young girl and her grandmother practice reading together. The rest of the family assumes that Grandma is teaching the girl to read. The surprise is revealed at a birthday party.

Heide, F. & Gilliland, J. (1990). *The day of Ahmed's secret*. New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard. **P**

One of the few books in English with an Arab-speaking culture as the setting. A young boy learns to write his name.

Levine, E. (1989). *I hate English!* New York: Scholastic. **P**

A conscientious teacher in New York's Chinatown helps an immigrant from Hong Kong learn the importance of being fluent in two languages.

Paulsen, G. (1993). *Nightjohn*. New York: Delacorte. **C**

A short chapter book set in the South before the Civil War, this is a moving story about a slave who teaches other slaves to read and write even though it is against the law. He suffers physical violence at the hands of slaveowners but does not give up his mission. (Parents should preview: harsh but accurate descriptions of the mistreatment of slaves.)

PART FOUR

Helping Your Child Become a Better Citizen

Conserving Nature

As a society, we are doing much to protect animals and the natural environment from loss or depletion. We have passed laws that protect our water, our endangered plants and animals, and our air. Children can learn simple ways to join in the effort to protect the planet and all life forms.

64. Pet Journals

Children can learn a great deal about responsibility through caring for pets. They will also learn that animals can be intelligent, loving, and loyal if they are treated well.

Try this!

Help your children keep a journal or diary of your new (or old!) pet's activities and care. You can record feeding and exercise times, trips to the vet, outings with the family, visits to the park. Your children can also have fun recording passages in the diary written from your pet's point of view. They will develop more compassion for and understanding of

the animal if they attempt to imagine how it is responding to games, the vet, the bone from the meat department, and other expressions of love and care from your family.

65. Personal Trash Count

Recycle aluminum cans, plastic, and glass. If your neighborhood has curbside recycling, have your children join you in daily sorting of items that can be recycled.

Try this!

Have all members of the family keep all their own personal trash for a day (or longer for more dramatic effect)—pop cans, gum and candy wrappers, juice containers, cereal boxes, toy containers, etc. Decide as a family how much of the trash can be recycled and how much of it could be eliminated by buying larger quantities, using reusable containers, and so forth.

66. Trash Pickup Day

Although many neighborhoods have a regular trash pickup day, some well-traveled areas still have problems with people throwing trash on the streets.

Try this!

Establish a day of the week on which you and your family pick up trash around your neighborhood. Take a bag for recycling materials and one for trash. Children need to see that you value a clean neighborhood and that you are willing to take responsibility for keeping it that way.

67. Turn It Off!

Much water and electricity is wasted because of simple neglect.

Try this!

Set some general rules for turning off the lights, television, and water when they are not in use. Then observe your children actually following those rules. Also set an example for them—they need to see that you are serious about conserving water and other resources. Turning off the water while you brush your teeth saves forty gallons of water each month for every person in the family. Take a one-gallon milk carton and have the children help you fill forty of them for a bath to bring the point home!

68. Coupon Cutters

In order to help children see that your family also wants to conserve its own resources, cut out coupons with your child.

Try this!

Have children group the coupons into household items and food items. Keep track of the money saved by using coupons. Plan the purchase of an item for the family or a trip with the money saved.

A variation:

Watch for sales on items your family regularly uses. Add the money saved to your "family trip" fund.

Books about Conserving Nature

Allen, J. (1992). *Tiger*. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press. **P**
Exciting book which convinces the reader that a tiger is going to be shot in the story. Surprise ending!

Baker, J. (1987). *Where the forest meets the sea*. New York: Greenwillow. **P**
Beautiful collage illustrations of the coast of Australia with the strong message that the environment is everyone's responsibility.

Baker, J. (1991). *Window*. New York: Greenwillow. **P**
Beautiful illustrations show the changes in an Australian neighborhood. The message is that by understanding how we personally affect the environment, we can make positive changes.

Brown, R. (1991). *The world that Jack built*. New York: Dutton. **P**
A cautionary tale about the pollution that threatens our way of life.

Cherry, L. (1990). *The great kapok tree*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. **P**
Beautifully illustrated book about the rain forest. While the woodman with his ax sleeps under the kapok tree, the animals who live there whisper to him. When he awakes, he leaves without cutting down the tree.

Cherry, L. (1992). *A river ran wild*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. **P**

An historical look at a river over time and how those who lived on its banks affected its purity. Beautiful border illustrations provide lots of information. Hopeful message that polluted areas can be cleaned up.

Clark, A. (1991). *In my mother's house*. New York: Viking. **P**

A collection of simple poems by Tewa Indian children of New Mexico. They celebrate their respect for and dependence on "mother earth."

Glimmerveen, U. (1989). *A tale of Antarctica*. New York: Scholastic. **P**

A penguin family suffers the effects of an oil spill in the Antarctic Ocean.

Goble, P. (1991). *I sing for animals*. New York: Bradbury Press. **P**

"Man's world changes, but the natural world is constant." This is the message of this poetic little book written in the style of a Native American legend.

Jeffers, S. (1991). *Brother Eagle, Sister Sky*. New York: Dial. **P**

A poetic version of Chief Seattle's speech in which he described the respect that Native Americans have for the earth and expressed his concern about the way man will treat the environment in the future. A beautiful text for reading aloud.

Martin, R. (1992). *The rough-faced girl*. New York: Scholastic. **P**

This is an Algonquin Indian Cinderella story in which inner beauty and goodness are rewarded. The "prince" of the original story is transformed into nature itself in this beautiful legend.

Naylor, P. (1991). *Shiloh*. New York: Atheneum. **C**

A touching story about a boy who rescues a dog that is being harshly treated by its master. A values conflict develops because the boy must choose to do what is legally right (return the dog to its owner) or to do what seems

morally right to him (keep the dog and give it good care). A happy ending emphasizes the work ethic as well as care for animals.

Rand, G. (1992). *Prince William*. New York: Holt. **P**
A story about a little seal that is saved from the effects of the Exxon Valdez oil spill. A young girl makes the wise but difficult choice to return the seal to its natural habitat.

Sasso, S. (1994). *In God's name*. Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights. **P**
Everything and everyone has a name, but what is God's name? A poetic fable that celebrates diverse cultures around the world but finds their unity in reverence for a higher power.

Seuss, Dr. (1971). *The lorax*. New York: Random House. **P**
This little book is a cautionary fable of the effects of logging and the harvesting of other natural resources. The "lorax" is a little creature who speaks for the trees that are being cut down. At the end of the book, only one seed of a "truffula" tree (not a single tree!) is left.

Tsuchiya, Y. (1988). *Faithful elephants*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. **P**
A true story about the Tokyo Zoo during World War II. The zookeepers are told that they must put the animals to death because of fear the zoo might be bombed and the animals escape and attack the people of the city. Sadly, they choose to poison the animals' food, but the elephants won't eat it. A sad ending and a powerful and rare commentary on the effects of war on animals.

Turner, A. (1989). *Heron street*. New York: Harper & Row. **P**
A book about the impact of urban growth on the birds, who find places to nest in the midst of a town.

Van Allsburg, C. (1990). *Just a dream*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. **P**
A great story with a dream sequence that shows the effects of littering and pollution on future society.

Appreciating the Value of Work

Most people agree that it is good to expend physical or mental effort in order to produce or accomplish something worthwhile. Parents can model this in a variety of ways. Keeping your home in good order, showing your children that you value order, and also showing them what it takes in the way of work to keep it that way can help them to understand that harmony and pleasant living conditions are accomplished through work.

69. How You Make a Living

Children need to see that the family income for daily needs is obtained through your work outside the home as well.

Try this!

Bring home actual "pieces" of your work—samples, blueprints, tools, photos, boxes, brochures, computer disks with plans, etc. Let children see what you do every day. Be sure to let them ask questions about these items.

70. So Many Ways to Work!

Almost any object in the home represents a number of different kinds of work. Think, for example, about the telephone. There are people who work as telephone operators and who print and publish the phone book. There are companies full of people who make the plastic and metal components of the telephone. Other people put telephones together, install the telephone lines, and put up the telephone poles. You can think of many more people whose daily work is connected to the telephone.

Try this!

Choose several objects in the home. See who can come up with the largest number of occupations connected in some way to one of those objects.

A variation for younger children:

Look through newspapers and magazines to find pictures of people at work. Cut out the pictures and paste them on a big sheet of poster board or in a blank book.

71. At-Home Quiet Time

Children's lives today are often a hectic round of school, lessons of various kinds, clubs, social activities, "Nintendo," and other visual and auditory stimulants. Time must be allotted for study and quiet reading. Once children *can* read, they must continue actively to *engage in reading*. After third or fourth grade, many children who have learned to read may experience difficulties with school reading tasks because they do not read during leisure time. Children who do not read regularly cannot read with enough speed and comprehension to keep up with reading tasks in the middle and upper grades.

Try this!

Let the child set aside a specific time for reading. It is most helpful if everyone in the home reads at the same time—no TV, just newspapers, magazines, and, best of all, books. Have a brief sharing time in which all tell what they have been reading, what they have learned, or what they are enjoying about their reading materials.

A variation:

Have your children pick a quiet place in the house where they can study. Turn off the radio, stereo, TV, etc. Maintain this quiet hour as a regular part of your time at home.

72. Take Them to Work

April 28 is a specific day set aside nationally for parents of girls—*Take Our Daughters to Work Day*. When your children understand the atmosphere of your workplace, they will not only cease to worry about you when they are at school but will also begin to appreciate what you do to support the family. You may need to explain to young children that you are paid money to work there and this is how the family is able to buy groceries, etc.

Try this!

Take your child to work. Show her your desk, the bathrooms, the cafeteria, supply rooms, and the boss's office. Your co-workers can talk with older children about what they do and how it relates to what you do. Children of all ages can try out office equipment and help you staple, copy, apply labels, and perform other simple office tasks. It may be helpful to show young children a clock so they can see how long you stay at work each day to earn money for the family.

73. The Value of a Dollar

Many children do not have a clear idea of the relationship between work and money. If children are old enough to count money and make a purchase at the store, then they are old enough to understand the connection between work, money, and purchasing.

Try this!

Have your children make a list of the beginning wages of part-time jobs in your community—yard work, baby-sitting, fast-food places. Then make a parallel list of the items they wish to buy, from "Nintendo" games to sports equipment to ordering out for pizza. They can figure how many hours many people need to work in order to purchase their desired items.

A variation:

If your child wants to receive money for work done beyond his regular chores, post a job list on the refrigerator with a description of the job and the amount you are willing to pay for a job well done.

Books about the Value of Work

Bulla, C. (1975). *Shoeshine girl*. New York: Crowell. **C**

A child learns a valuable lesson about working and makes a friend in the process.

Mitchell, M. (1993). *Uncle Jed's barber shop*. New York: Simon and Schuster. **P**

A black man saves his money for a long time in order to fulfill his dream: his own barber shop.

Naylor, P. (1991). *Shiloh*. New York: Atheneum. **C**

A wonderful chapter book, good as a read-aloud for early grades or older children. A boy rescues an abused dog from a cruel owner. His dilemma is choosing between what is legal and what is right. In the end he works for the man to buy the dog. Great issues of grappling with decisions and development of character.

Warner, G. (1977). *The boxcar children*. Chicago: Albert Whitman. **C**

A classic read-aloud about a family of children on their own, learning how to work together to survive.

Williams, S. (1992). *Working cotton*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. **P**

This book creates a world from the viewpoint of an African-American child as she works in the migrant farm fields of California.

Williams, V. (1982). *A chair for my mother*. New York: Greenwillow. **P**

Lovely picture book about a young girl who saves her money to buy her hardworking mother a comfortable chair.

Social and Political Action

There are many ways to assist your community through active involvement in the political system or government agencies. Children can begin to recognize that our freedoms and benefits, such as schools and roads, depend upon the contributions of citizens through work and taxes.

74. Get Involved!

Only slightly more than one-third of those eligible to vote in local and national elections actually do so. Children whose parents do not vote will see little value in our political system and have little faith in the power of the people to make changes in society through the ballot box.

Try this!

In addition to taking your children with you when you vote, help them see the process from the "inside." Find a candidate you can support and then volunteer to help that candidate get elected. Discuss with your children why your family supports him or her and then get actively involved—stuff envelopes, go door-to-door, put out a yard sign.

75. Express Yourself!

Children need to know what matters to you and to understand your thinking processes and reasoning about issues. Then they need to see that you care enough about your community and neighborhood to express yourself openly for change.

Try this!

Attend a meeting of the city council or school board with your child when there is a subject of interest to your family, business, or community. Speak up or vote your conscience on the issue important to you. Talk with your child about the importance of having a voice and a choice in local and national elections and community decisions.

Books about Social and Political Action

Avi (1991). *Nothing but the truth*. New York: Orchard. **C**
A thoughtful chapter book about constitutional rights in a high school. Best for junior-high level children. Raises more questions than it answers about our basic rights of free speech.

Bunting, E. (1988). *How many days to America?* New York: Clarion. **P**
Story of a family leaving a land of political unrest and coming to America where they are welcomed.

Everett, G. (1993). *John Brown: One man against slavery*. New York: Rizzoli International Publications. **C**
A mature theme in a book with illustrations painted in 1941 by Jacob Lawrence, a prominent African-American artist. The story is told from the viewpoint of Brown's sixteen-year-old daughter.

Havill, J. (1992). *Treasure nap*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. **P**
The story of a great-great-grandmother's journey from Mexico to the United States is told to a young girl by her mother on a very hot afternoon. Grandma carried three treasured possessions: a *serape* (blanket), a *pito* (flute), and a wooden bird cage.

Hewitt, M. and MacKay, C. (1981). *One proud summer*. Women's Press. **C**
Good read-aloud for older children about women's courage in the early labor movement. Their brave stand and willingness to disobey unfair laws paved the way for greater freedoms for all citizens.

Jacobs, W. (1990). *Ellis Island: New hope in a new land*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. **P**
A factual book about the immigrants who landed on Ellis Island at the turn of the century.

Leighton, M. (1992). *An Ellis Island Christmas*. New York: Scholastic. **P**
A family of immigrants celebrates its first Christmas in a new country: America.

Oppenheim, S. (1992). *The lily cupboard*. New York: HarperCollins. **P**
Set in the World War II era, a family hides a young Jewish girl from the Nazis. Gentle message about the love that has prompted her family to leave her with strangers.

Charity and Compassion

It has been a part of the American national character to volunteer or give service to those less fortunate than ourselves or to support political and religious causes we believe in. You can teach your children to continue this tradition by making volunteering a part of your family's together time.

76. The Gift of Time

Not all families feel that they can donate money to worthy causes or even that giving money is the most effective way to help individuals or organizations. Sometimes a more personal commitment of time to help those in need can be a meaningful way to teach children to be less selfish and more grateful. Help your child see that one does not always have to be paid in order to do a service for others. Kindness and unselfishness can be nurtured in children through example and encouragement.

Try this!

Volunteer at a local charity, church, or soup kitchen and explain to your children how important it is to return something of what we have been given. Help children to think of their own volunteer projects—making crafts items or toys for

a hospital or church charity, doing yard work for an elderly neighbor, cleaning up a vacant lot near your home, or volunteering to watch and care for a pet while someone is on vacation. Work at a soup kitchen or church or civic organization during the holidays or regularly as a family. Volunteer as a family to be bell-ringers for the Salvation Army during the holidays.

77. "Pass-It-On" Field Trip

If you donate to a charity, discuss with your child the importance of sharing and supporting those who have experienced the tragedies of war, famine, and natural disasters. Even young children can understand the idea of the "Golden Rule"—that we help others because we realize how grateful we would be to receive such help in similar circumstances.

Try this!

When children outgrow clothing and shoes, let them help pack their used items with other family clothes or household goods that are no longer needed and take a family trip to

Goodwill or the Salvation Army. Ask the workers there to explain to your children what happens to the clothing and other household items and why it is important that the community support these organizations.

78. Share Your Joy

Children exhibit much natural joy and affection. Nowhere are those lovely, youthful qualities more appreciated than at nursing homes.

Try this!

If you already have friends or relatives at nursing homes, it is natural to take your children with you to visit and bring comfort to those living there. If your children are learning the piano or other instruments, they can play for the residents. They will find a willing audience for their hard work in learning their instruments, and they will also experience the joy of bringing happiness to others through donation of a little time and effort.

79. Reading Is Caring

When you visit a nursing home, your children can read books to residents. A number of excellent books about relationships between young children and older friends and relatives are cited below. Children can also write to residents in nursing homes. Directors of these facilities are more than glad to share names and addresses of those who would appreciate receiving mail.

Books about Charity and Compassion

Barker, M. (1991). *Magical hands*. Natick, MA: Picture Book Studio. **P**

A kindly man does special favors for all his friends, helping them all to accomplish their daily work in record time.

Burnett, F. (1911). *The secret garden*. New York: Lippincott. **C**

Good read-aloud (also a movie) about a young girl whose parents have died. She goes to live with a hermit-like uncle. Ignored by him, she begins to understand love through her unselfish relationships with new friends and "a secret garden."

Cooney, B. (1982). *Miss Rumphius*. New York: Viking. **P**

Delightful picture book about an older women who wants to make the world more beautiful by planting flowers.

DiSalvo-Ryan, D. (1991). *Uncle Willie and the soup kitchen*. New York: Morrow Junior Books. **P**

A young boy learns a lesson about unselfishness by helping his uncle at a soup kitchen.

Fox, M. (1985). *Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge*. Brooklyn, NY: Kane Miller. **P**

A touching picture book about a little boy who has many friends at a nursing home. When Miss Nancy loses her memory, he helps her to find it through his own thoughtful strategy.

Fox, P. (1984). *One-eyed cat*. Scarsdale, NY: Bradbury Press. **C**

Hard lessons are learned when a boy accidently shoots a cat. He learns about compassion and forgiveness.

Innocenti, R. (1991). *Rose Blanche*. New York: Stewart, Tabori & Chang. **P**

A beautifully illustrated book tells of a young girl's compassion for prisoners in a concentration camp in World War II. Her wartime death adds to the bittersweet message of the book. (Parents preview)

Luttrell, I. (1990). *Three good blankets*. New York: Atheneum. **P**
An old woman's love for her animals is shown when she shares her blankets with them on a cold night.

Mills, L. (1991). *The rag coat*. Boston: Little, Brown. **P**
A girl in a poor coal-mining town suffers ridicule because of a patchwork coat her mother has made her. Classmates learn a lesson in compassion when she tells them about the memories each patch holds for her.

Pfister, M. (1992). *The rainbow fish*. New York: North-South Books. **P**
Sweetly illustrated picture book for young children about a beautiful fish who learns about unselfishness by sharing his lovely scales with the other fish.

Polacco, P. (1992). *Mrs. Katz and Tush*. New York: Bantam. **P**
A gentle story about a friendship between an older Jewish woman and a young African-American boy.

Silverstein, S. (1964). *The giving tree*. New York: Harper & Row. **P**
A simply illustrated book with messages on many levels. A tree gladly give her apples, leaves, branches, trunk, and ultimately her stump to a rather selfish boy.

Justice

There are many ways parents can help their children understand the concept of justice. Parents naturally reinforce this concept when they help children share, when treats are divided equally, and when they insist that children compensate others if they have broken or misplaced someone's property.

80. Courthouse Visit

Children need to see that there are formal ways in which communities contribute to a just society.

Try this!

Visit a small-claims court with your children. They should be old enough to sit quietly and to follow the proceedings. It is important that you help children see that small-claims court would not be necessary for the solving of problems if the two parties could agree about what is fair. Sometimes when adults cannot agree on what is fair, a judge will decide for them.

81. Family Meetings

Children need to feel that their problems are heard at home. Sometimes they may feel that an injustice has been done or that they have been treated unfairly by another family member.

Try this!

Establish a weekly meeting in which all family members have the opportunity to talk about their week, family rules, etc. Provide time for discussion and for clear explanation of rules that may seem "unfair."

82. Chronicles of Justice and Mercy

Learning about justice and mercy through books can help children gain a deeper understanding of these concepts.

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Try this!

When children are old enough for a good read-aloud book without pictures, begin the wonderful series *The Chronicles of Narnia* by C. S. Lewis. This series is the best treatment of justice and mercy in children's literature.

Books about Justice

Avi. (1991). *Nothing but the truth*. New York: Orchard. **C**
An interesting read-aloud for upper elementary and middle-school children about a boy who, against the rules, hums during the National Anthem. The results of his act and the turmoil among the adults and students in the story do not lead to an easy resolution. This book can provoke good discussions about rules, honesty, and freedom of speech.

Lasker, J. (1980). *Nick joins in*. Chicago: Whitman. **P**
A group of children learns a lesson about justice when they include a handicapped boy in their games.

Lewis, C. S. (1950). *The chronicles of Narnia*. New York: Scholastic. **C**
A seven-book series beginning with *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. Very much an allegory of Christianity, but most children love it for the adventure and the strength of the characters.

Louie, A. (1982). *Yeh-Shen: A Cinderella story*. New York: Philomel. **P**
One of many fairy tales dealing with the theme of justice. This one happens to be the Chinese version of the traditional tale.

Appreciating Differences among People

Children of the 21st century will undoubtedly live in an increasingly diverse society. Parents need to help children recognize that, despite surface differences such as skin color and language, all people have feelings, love their families, and want good things in their lives. A few activities such as those discussed below can help your family see beneath the surface and find the common ground among all community members—especially the elderly and people of different ethnic backgrounds.

83. The Messages Your Children Receive

Unfortunately, your children will probably encounter many stereotypes about older people when they watch TV. Explain what a stereotype is. Perhaps you could say, "If TV programs show older people as stereotypes, then it means that the show makes us think that all old people behave or look the same. For example, if many old people are shown on TV as grouchy or helpless, then we are probably seeing a stereotype because we know that this not true of all older people." Again, if most of the handicapped people on TV are shown as helpless or incompetent, we are seeing a stereotype.

Try this!

With your child, choose several TV programs that have older people as characters. Make a list ahead of time of the qualities or behaviors that would be stereotypes of older people. As you watch the programs, check off how many of those behaviors you spotted in the shows. Afterward, discuss with your child what you found and how the programs showed either stereotyped one-dimensional characters or true-to-life characters with many different character traits.

A variation:

Do the same activity with different ethnic and racial groups, with women and girls, and with handicapped people.

84. Interviewing Grandma or Grandpa

Although children often see grandparents on a regular basis, it comes as a surprise to young children that Grandma was ever a young girl. An interview can help children appreciate grandparents in a new way and feel a closer bond with them.

Try this!

Encourage your child to develop an interview that focuses on Grandma as a young girl. What did Grandma wear? Where did she live? What games did she play? Did she have a TV? What did she want to be when she grew up? Does she have any pictures of herself at your child's age?

85. What Can You Teach Me?

Grandparents often have skills that are seldom taught in our hectic "modern" life, such as knitting, crocheting, quilting, woodworking, even planting a garden.

Try this!

Arrange a quiet time with Grandma or Grandpa in which some beginning lessons in a skill are taught.

86. Stories Tell the Story!

One way parents and teachers can help young children appreciate the diversity of our American culture is to tell and compare stories from different ethnic groups.

Try this!

Check out these two books from your local library: *The Relatives Came* by Cynthia Rylant (about an Appalachian family) and *Big Mama's* by Donald Crew (about an African-American family). Read the stories aloud with your child and then list the similarities and differences in the two families. It's likely you'll find many more similarities than differences. Then compare your own family. How are family reunions and get-togethers like the ones in the books?

87. Stories Tell the Story Again!

In addition to obvious physical differences among many ethnic groups, religious holidays and traditions provide areas for discussion and appreciation of difference.

Try this!

Check out these books from the library (or better yet, buy them to celebrate your own holiday observance): *My First Kwanzaa Book* by Deborah M. Newton Chocolate, and *Elijah's Angel: A Story for Chanukah and Christmas* by Michael J. Rosen. Read the books aloud and then discuss the different holidays with your child. You may need some background material from an encyclopedia to help you—another valuable trip to the library, perhaps! Make a list of how the holidays are similar and how they are different. Children may ask tough questions like, "Why don't we all believe the same thing?" For the young child, give a simple answer such as, "We don't all like the same things, do we? We like different foods, movies, colors, and games. In the same way, we all have choices about what we believe." For older children, it might be appropriate to discuss your own beliefs and how you came to think the way you do.

88. You Be You, I'll Be Me!

Even young children can begin to recognize the difference between following sensible rules (obeying the traffic lights, following directions in class) and unhealthy conformity (needing to wear, say, or do things just like your friends).

Try this!

Read aloud with your children the book *The Araboolies of Liberty Street* by Sam Swope. For the follow-up activity, provide your children with large sheets of paper and crayons or markers. Ask them to draw "Liberty Street" before the

Araboolies came and after the "Pinches" left. Talk about the differences. List some reasons why it is good to be yourself. Ask, "Why is it sometimes hard to be yourself? Why do we sometimes want to be just like our friends?" Finally, list three unique talents, skills, or characteristics of each child. Celebrate their individuality!

Books about Appreciating Differences

The Elderly

DePaola, T. (1973). *Nana upstairs & Nana downstairs.* New York: Putnam. **P**

A touching story about a young boy's love for his grandma and great-grandma. He learns about love and death.

DePaola, T. (1981). *Now one foot, now the other.* New York: Putnam. **P**

A gentle picture book about a young boy and his grandfather. Grandpa helps the little boy learn to walk by saying, "Now one foot, now the other." When Grandpa has a stroke, the boy helps him walk again.

DiSalvo-Ryan, D. (1991). *Uncle Willie and the soup kitchen.* New York: Morrow Junior Books. **P**

"Uncle Willie" decides to help his community by serving in a soup kitchen. His young nephew learns about caring for others less fortunate by going with him to work in the kitchen.

Farber, N. (1979). *How does it feel to be old?* New York: E. P. Dutton. **P**

Through her stories and memories, an older person points out to a child the advantages and disadvantages of being old.

Fox, M. (1989). *Night noises*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. **P**

Delightful picture book about an old woman whose children and grandchildren are going to surprise her for her birthday. As she naps, lovely "dream" illustrations show her thinking back to when she was a young girl.

Fox, M. (1985). *Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge*. Brooklyn, NY: Kane Miller. **P**

A compassionate story of a boy who gives an older woman back her memory by bringing in little objects that represent what he understands to be a memory.

Gelfand, M. (1986). *My Great-Grandpa Joe*. New York: Four Winds Press. **P**

A beautiful and loving family book illustrated with photographs. Could easily be a "pattern" for using family photos and making your own books.

Johnson, A. (1990). *When I am old with you*. New York: Orchard. **P**

"When I am old with you" is a young child's constant refrain throughout the book as she tells her grandpa what they will do together in the future.

Lasky, K. (1988). *Sea swan*. New York: Macmillan. **P**

An independent old woman decides she will learn to swim, and she does. Great message about perseverance and refusal to be limited by advancing years.

Smith, R. (1984). *The war with Grandpa*. New York: Delacorte. **C**

A young boy is challenged to grow in his love for his family and especially for his grandpa, who moves in with the family and moves the boy out of his room.

People of Different Ethnic Backgrounds

Adoff, A. (1973). *Black is brown is tan*. New York: Harper. **P**
The author shows a biracial family doing what all good families do—singing, reading, playing together, and loving each other.

Cannon, J. (1993). *Stellaluna*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. **P**
A beautifully illustrated allegory of acceptance and diversity. A little bat falls into the nest of a mother bird who allows her to stay if she will behave like a bird and not teach her baby birds to act like bats. In the end the birds and the bats rejoice in the friendship built on their similarities *and* their appreciation of their differences.

Carlstrom, N. (1992). *Northern lullaby*. New York: Philomel Books. **P**
A poetic bedtime verse illustrated in a Native American style with "brother gray wolf" and other animals representing mankind's kinship with nature.

Chocolate, D. (1992). *My first Kwanzaa book*. New York: Scholastic. **P**
This book introduces children to Kwanzaa, an African-American holiday established in 1966.

Friedman, I. (1984). *How my parents learned to eat*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. **P**
A story of the courtship of an Asian woman and an American sailor told from the point of view of their child. Their eating habits illustrate their differences.

Mandelbaum, P. (1990). *You be me and I'll be you*. Brooklyn, NY: Kane Miller. **P**
Father and daughter in a biracial marriage try to look like each other with enjoyable results and the gentle message that inside we are the same.

Margolies, B. (1990). *Rehema's journey: A visit in Tanzania*. New York: Scholastic. **P**
The visit of a young African-American girl to the land of her roots. Wonderful photographs.

Martin, B. (1987). *Knots on a counting rope*. NY: Henry Holt. **P**
A story of a blind Native American boy and his grandfather. The boy often requests to hear the story of his birth. Each knot on the counting rope represents an important event in the child's life.

O'Dell, S. (1970). *Sing down the moon*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. **C**
A story about the forced march of the Navajo people from Canyon de Chelly to Fort Sumner, New Mexico. The story is told from the viewpoint of a young Navaho girl who fights the loss of hope and dreams of returning to her beautiful canyon.

Paterson, K. (1988). *Park's quest*. New York: Lodestar Books. **C**
A young boy sets out to learn more about his father, who died in Vietnam. He faces a difficult challenge when he discovers that he has a sister. (Parent preview: mature subject.)

Polacco, P. (1990). *Just plain fancy*. New York: Bantam Books. **P**
Lovely picture book that introduces the Amish concept of plainness; one should not call attention to one's self through fancy clothing or adornment. When a little Amish girl raises a peacock, she learns that the beauty of God's creation is accepted by everyone.

Ringgold, F. (1991). *Tar beach*. New York: Crown Publishers. **P**
A fanciful book about an African-American family's fun on the rooftops of the city at their "tar beach."

Rosen, M. (1992). *Elijah's angel: A story for Chanukah and Christmas*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. **P**
A young Jewish boy receives a beautiful hand-carved angel as a Christmas present from an 80-year-old African-

American barber. The boy then gives his older friend a menorah he made in Hebrew school. Their gift giving shows that friendship does not know bounds of age, race, or religious belief.

San Souchi, R. (1987). *The legend of Scarface*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday. **P**

A young warrior shows himself to have great inner beauty despite his disfigured face.

Speare, E. (1983). *The sign of the beaver*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. **C**

A good read-aloud for third grade and up about a young pioneer boy in the Maine wilderness in the 1700s who must endure the winter alone in his frontier cabin. A Native American boy befriends him and teaches him how to survive the harsh weather.

Spier, P. (1979). *People*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday. **P**

A beautiful picture book packed with illustrations that show the wonderful diversity of mankind—different noses, eyes, houses, games, and so forth.

Surat, M. (1983). *Angel child, dragon child*. Milwaukee, WI: Raintree. **P**

A Vietnamese girl who misses her mother is treated cruelly by a classmate. Finally they are both disciplined. When she realizes he is crying, she shows great compassion and forgiveness and offers him a cookie. A discussion about her mother follows, and they gain new respect for each other.

Swope, S. (1989). *The Araboolies of Liberty Street*. New York: Crown. **P**

A beautifully illustrated and humorously told allegory of freedom of expression and appreciation of difference. The wildly original Araboolies move into a house on tightly conforming "Liberty" street. Their unconventional ways quickly create problems that are solved by the neighborhood children.

Taylor, M. (1981). *Let the circle be unbroken*. New York: Dial. **C**

Taylor, M. (1990). *Mississippi bridge*. New York: Dial. **C**

Taylor, M. (1976). *Roll of thunder hear my cry*. New York: Dial. **C**
A tale of a warm family life in the midst of the racial discrimination of the early twentieth century in the South. The family deals with fear and humiliation in their experiences with cross burnings and night riders. A good read-aloud for fourth grade and up.

Taylor, M. (1975). *Song of the trees*. New York: Dial. **C**
All four books by Mildred Taylor are based on her family history and tell of the trials and joys of an African-American family in the 1930s and 1940s in Mississippi.

Winter, J. (1988). *Follow the drinking gourd*. New York: Knopf. **P**
The story of slaves escaping to freedom in the North by singing a song and following "the drinking gourd"—the Big Dipper.

Yashima, T. (1955). *Crow boy*. New York: Viking Press. **C**
A gently told story of an outcast Japanese boy who, through the efforts of an understanding teacher, begins to recognize and express his unique talents.

Yolen, J. (1988). *The devil's arithmetic*. New York: Viking Kestrel. **C**
An interesting time-travel book for older children about a young black girl who travels back to a concentration camp in World War II.

Understanding People with Disabilities

When children are young, they sometimes point at people with obvious disabilities and ask questions that adults might feel are embarrassing. Because of our own views of handicaps, we seldom feel free to let children ask questions of a person in a wheelchair. We may feel that it would be uncomfortable for the person or perhaps an invasion of privacy. Our "shushing" of the child and our inability to answer questions further reinforces a negative image of people with disabilities. In recent years, a number of wonderful children's books have addressed these issues. They provide a sort of educational buffer zone that gives information to you and your child and helps us all to talk more freely about sensitive issues. Children are naturally curious, but they are also naturally compassionate. They want to understand; they want to help; and they soon forget about the "condition" and just want to be friends.

89. "How Does It Feel?"

Sometimes children need to experience and hear others tell about disabilities in order to develop a compassionate understanding.

Try this!

Hospitals, nursing homes, and often schools have wheelchairs that children can use to find out how life would be different if they could not use their legs. After letting your child ride in a wheelchair for a while, read the story *Mama Zooms* by J. Cowen-Fletcher The author bases this story on her sister, who is a "wheelchair mom (and a practicing veterinarian)." When you have finished reading, ask your child why she thinks the author says nothing about disabilities in the book. What message might the author be trying to convey to the reader? Perhaps your child will pick up on the attitude that life was still great fun with Mama despite her wheelchair—and sometimes because of it!

90. "All the Better to See You With!"

Many children have less than perfect vision. Sometimes these children do not recognize that their vision is poor, or they do not want to wear glasses. This may escape parents' notice until

the children start school. The vicarious experience of solving this problem in a book can help educate children about vision disabilities.

Try this!

Read the lovely children's book *All the Better to See You With!* by Margaret Wild. Whether your children have vision problems or not, this book helps them to understand such problems and how glasses can often help. If you are unsure about your child's visual acuity, arrange for a vision test. Help your child understand that whether or not a person wears glasses, he or she is the same person inside.

91. "Mom Can't See Me!"

It isn't always children who are disabled in families. Children need to understand that adults with disabilities have families, homes, jobs, friends and everything that others have.

Try this!

Read the two wonderful books, *Mom Can't See Me* and *Mom's Best Friend* by Sally Hobart Alexander. The first book is about a mom who became blind later in her life. She explains how the family still works together and how they care for each other. The second book is about the author's beginning relationship with a Seeing Eye dog. Both books are written from the child's point of view. After reading these books, make a list of the ways in which this family is the same as yours and the ways in which the two families are different. It is likely that your child will see that, in all the important ways, handicapped people and their families are no different from your own family.

Books about People with Disabilities

Alexander, S. (1990). *Mom can't see me*. New York: Macmillan. **P**
A book that helps young children understand the challenges of being blind. Told from the viewpoint of a young child explaining what Mom can and can't do.

Betancourt, J. (1993). *My name is brain / Brian*. New York: Scholastic. **P**
A story about a boy who is very intelligent; explores the challenges of being gifted.

Booth, B. (1991). *Mandy*. New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard. **P**
Soft, sensitive illustrations add to the gentle story of a young deaf girl visiting her grandmother. Grandmother loses a much-cherished pin, and Mandy goes out in a storm to find it.

Coutant, H. (1983). *The gift*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. **P**
A young girl gives her older friend, who has become blind, the perfect and much-treasured gift—the promise to visit every day and describe everything she saw and did.

Cowen-Fletcher, J. (1993). *Mama zooms*. New York: Scholastic. **P**
A delightful book about a wheelchair mom (and practicing veterinarian) and a toddler who play creatively together throughout the book until "Mama zooms me right up until bedtime." There is no mention of disability, leaving the reader to focus on the loving and creative fun between mother and child.

Lasker, J. (1980). *Nick joins in*. Chicago: Whitman. **P**
A group of children learns a lesson about justice when they include a handicapped boy in their games.

MacLachlan, P. (1980). *Through Grandpa's eyes*. New York: Harper & Row. **P**
Grandpa is blind but reveals a whole new world to his grandson through the use of his other senses.

Peterson, J. (1977). *I have a sister, my sister is deaf*. New York: Harper & Row. **P**

The storyteller tells how her deaf sister finds ways to turn difficult situations into everyday experiences. She describes lip reading, sensing sound vibrations, and tuning in to body language.

Ross, R. (1993). *Harper 'n Moon*. New York: Atheneum. **C**

An abused, orphaned older boy who is "slow" and a younger boy become good friends. Their relationship demonstrates courage, trust, and a great friendship.

Wild, M. (1993). *All the better to see you with!* Whitman. **P**

Kate is a quiet, well-behaved child—"No trouble at all," her mother says. Neither Kate nor her parents know that she can't see well. The illustrations in this book are wonderful for showing how Kate views the world both before and after her new glasses change her life.

Yashima, T. (1983). *Crow boy*. New York: Puffin Books. **P**

Chibi does not seem to be able to function in school; he's "slow" and uninterested, and the children call him "stupid." Finally, a wise teacher discovers his real talent.

Self-Sacrifice

The sacrifice of one's personal interests or well-being for the sake of others or for a cause is one of the greatest moral virtues and is not easily taught.

92. Unsung Heroes

It is difficult (impossible?) to require children to be self-sacrificing, but books can again provide priceless glimpses of this noble human quality.

Try this!

Read *The Legend of the Bluebonnet* by Tomie de Paola. It is the Native American legend about the origin of the bluebonnet flower. When you have finished the book, draw a circle in the middle of a piece of paper and write the "problem" of the story in the circle. Then draw lines out from the circle (like sunrays) and write down a character at the end of each line. Then talk with your child about a decision that each character made and what you think motivated the character to make that decision. Talk with your child about the "highest" motivation for making decisions.

93. "Good Sam"

Many communities give local "Good Sam" awards (named for the Good Samaritan in the Bible) to those who go out of their way to help others. There are also two national organizations that give these awards: The American Police Hall of Fame (305-891-1700) and the National Catholic Development Conference (516-481-6000).

Try this!

See if your local newspaper has a record of the "Good Sam" (or similar) awards over several years, or call the numbers above. If you can find written accounts of the good deeds, then read them with or to your children. Ask them to listen for parts of the account that showed self-sacrifice on the part of the individuals.

Books about Self-Sacrifice

Brinckloe, J. (1985). *Fireflies*. New York: Macmillan. **P**
A good book for teaching children to respect all living creatures. A young boy captures a jar full of fireflies. Then he realizes that he will have to release them or they will die.

Buck, P. (1948). *The big wave*. New York: J. Day. **P**
A beautiful book about a farmer who sacrifices his own fields in order to warn his village about the impending "wave" or *tsunami* that may destroy the village.

Clements, A. (1988). *Big Al*. Saxonville, MA: Picture Book Studio. **P**
Big Al is a large, ugly fish who has trouble finding friends. He tries several strategies without success. Then one day the school of fish is caught in a net. It seems that Al must sacrifice himself to save them. A happy ending follows.

de Paola, T. (1983). *The legend of the bluebonnet*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons. **P**

Bittersweet story of a young orphan's sacrifice of her most beloved possession for the good of her tribe. Her name change from She-Who-Is-Alone to One-Who-Dearly-Loved-Her-People shows the central value of sacrifice for the good of the community.

Freedom and Patriotism

The principles of freedom from slavery or incarceration, of political independence, and of love and devotion to one's country—all of these can be taken for granted in a country such as ours. Children learn to appreciate in simple ways the freedoms we have.

94. Visit a Courtroom

Part of what makes our country operate as smoothly and fairly as it does is our judicial system. Many citizens will do anything to get out of jury duty. Don't set this poor example for your children. This is a right and responsibility of citizenship in the United States.

Try this!

Visit a courtroom and talk with your children about judges, juries, and fair trials.

95. What Is Democracy?

Most of us have never lived in a society where few decisions are left to the individual. It is easy to take for granted our basic freedoms: for example, voting for government officials, moving from one place to another, finding a new job, or choosing a place of worship.

Try this!

Have your children write out or dictate to you their concept of the ideal society or country to live in. Include laws, work, fun, freedoms, etc. Then read to your upper elementary and middle school children Lois Lowry's masterful, dark tale *The Giver* about a future society in which the citizens make no decisions for themselves. This book requires a preview by parents. It can lead to wonderful discussion about freedom and choice.

Books about Freedom and Patriotism

Bunting, E. (1990). *The wall*. New York: Clarion. **P**
Picture book about the Vietnam War memorial and its effects on one young child's grandfather.

Forbes, E. (1943). *Johnny Tremain*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-Clio. **C**
A classic piece of historical fiction set in Boston during the American Revolution. A great read-aloud for upper elementary and junior-high students—courage, patriotism, loyalty, and initiative abound!

Harris, D. (1993). *Sweet Clara and the freedom quilt*. New York: Knopf. **P**
Set in the days of slavery in the South, this story shows how a young girl learns the meaning of freedom.

Lowry, L. (1993). *The giver*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. **C**
A dark tale of a utopian society in which all decisions are made by the "elders." A twelve-year-old boy is chosen to be the next "giver" who will carry the memories of the community. An ambiguous ending will lead to great discussions.

Monjo, F. N. (1970). *The drinking gourd*. New York: Harper & Row. **P**
The admonition to "follow the drinking gourd" helped guide runaway slaves to freedom in the North. The "drinking gourd" was actually the Big Dipper. Beautiful illustrations.

Ringgold, F. (1992). *Aunt Harriet's underground railroad in the sky*. New York: Crown. **P**
Marvelously illustrated book about how the underground railroad helped slaves escape to the North during the Civil War. In this whimsical story, a young African-American girl meets Harriet Tubman on a freedom train in the sky. An imaginative way to deal with the factual history of the underground railroad.

About the Authors

Sharon Vincz Andrews is a former fourth-grade teacher who has taught at the college level for six years. She has developed courses in "Organizing Theme Cycles" and "Teaching Values through Children's Literature." Dr. Andrews teaches Reading, Language Arts, and Emergent Literacy for elementary-school teachers. She co-chaired the "Democracy in Education" conference at Indiana State University in April, 1990. She is also a member of the Institute for Global Ethics in Camden, Maine.

In 1996 she received the National Endowment for the Humanities grant for the study of the Foundations of Democracy in Public Schools—teaching about democracy through democratic practices in the classroom. She is a regular program reviewer for the National Reading Conference, the International Reading Association, the American Educational

Researchers Association, the Lilly Conference on College Teaching, and the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education. She regularly gives lectures and workshops on process writing, theme cycling, values in children's literature, and team learning in the classroom.

Cynthia D. Ali and her husband, Jehad, are parents of a six-year-old boy, Danny. They lived in Kuwait for several years while Jehad worked as a systems engineer for Kuwait National Oil Company. While they were there, Cynthia taught all grade levels of English to elementary-school children at Al-Noori Elementary School in Abu-Halifah, Kuwait. She was educated in child development at Youngtown State University. She is now a preschool teacher in Bloomington, Indiana.

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other fine parent resources
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- **Do you want your children to understand the value of hard work and persistence?**
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ISBN 1-883790-24-7

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